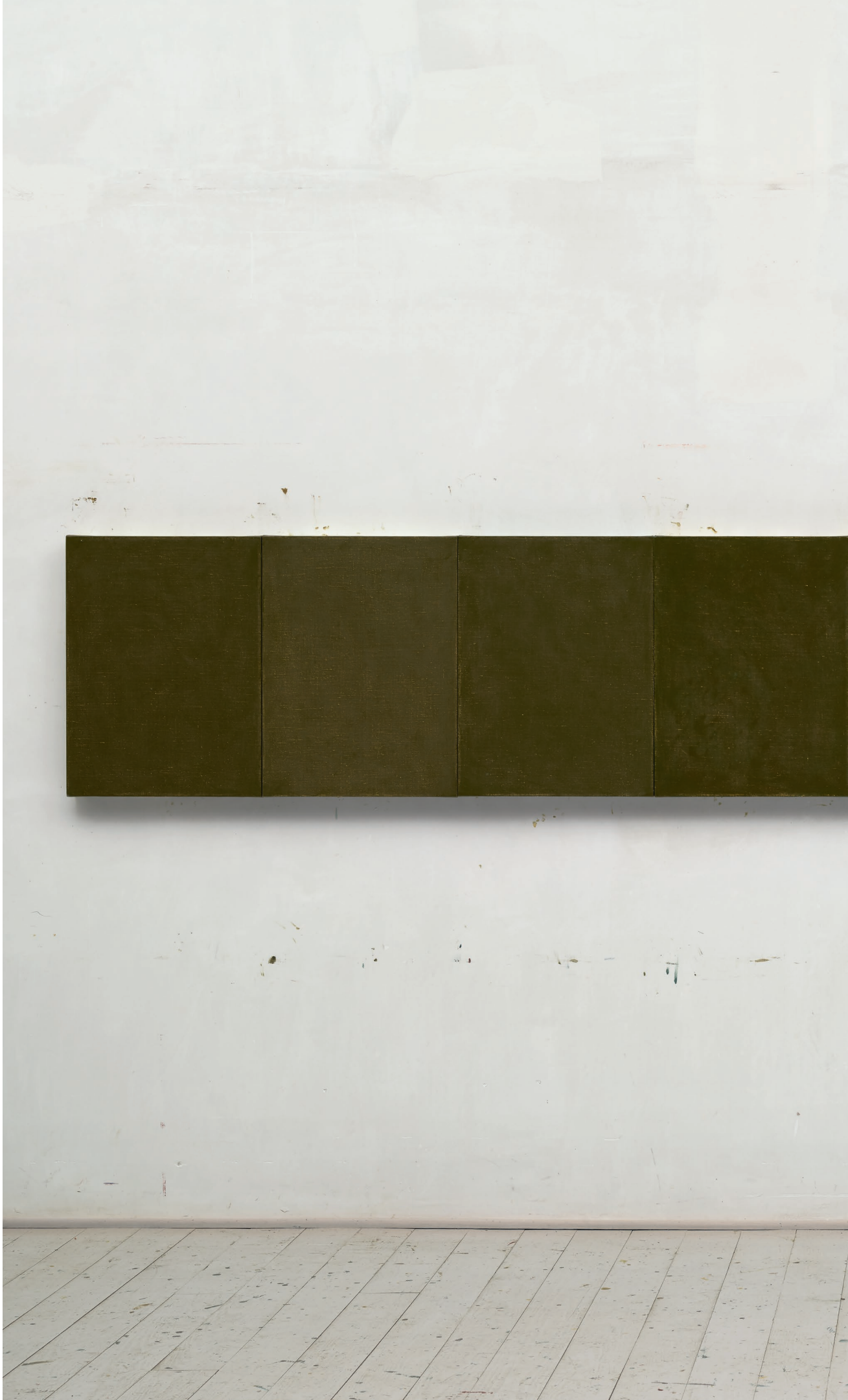


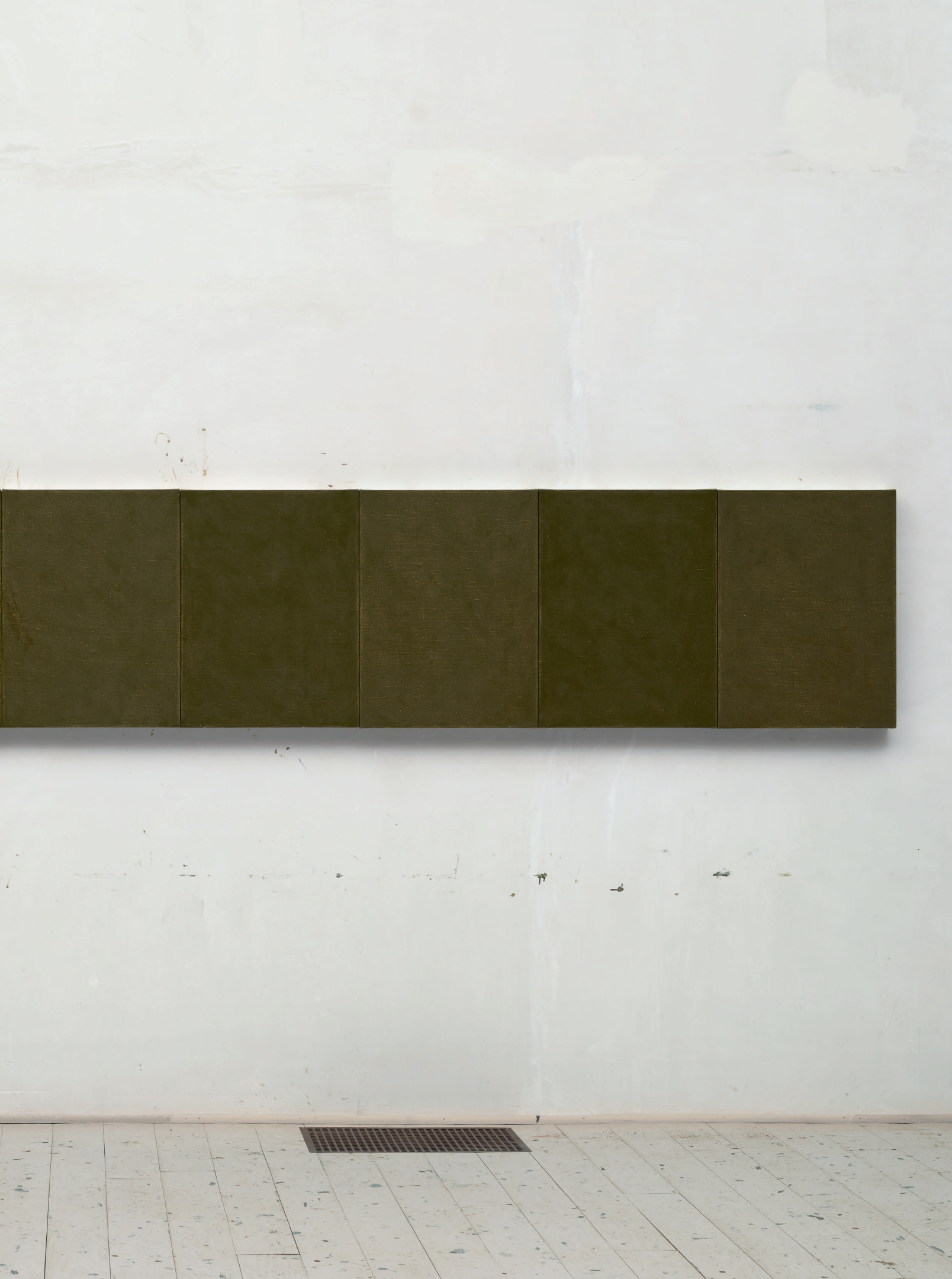


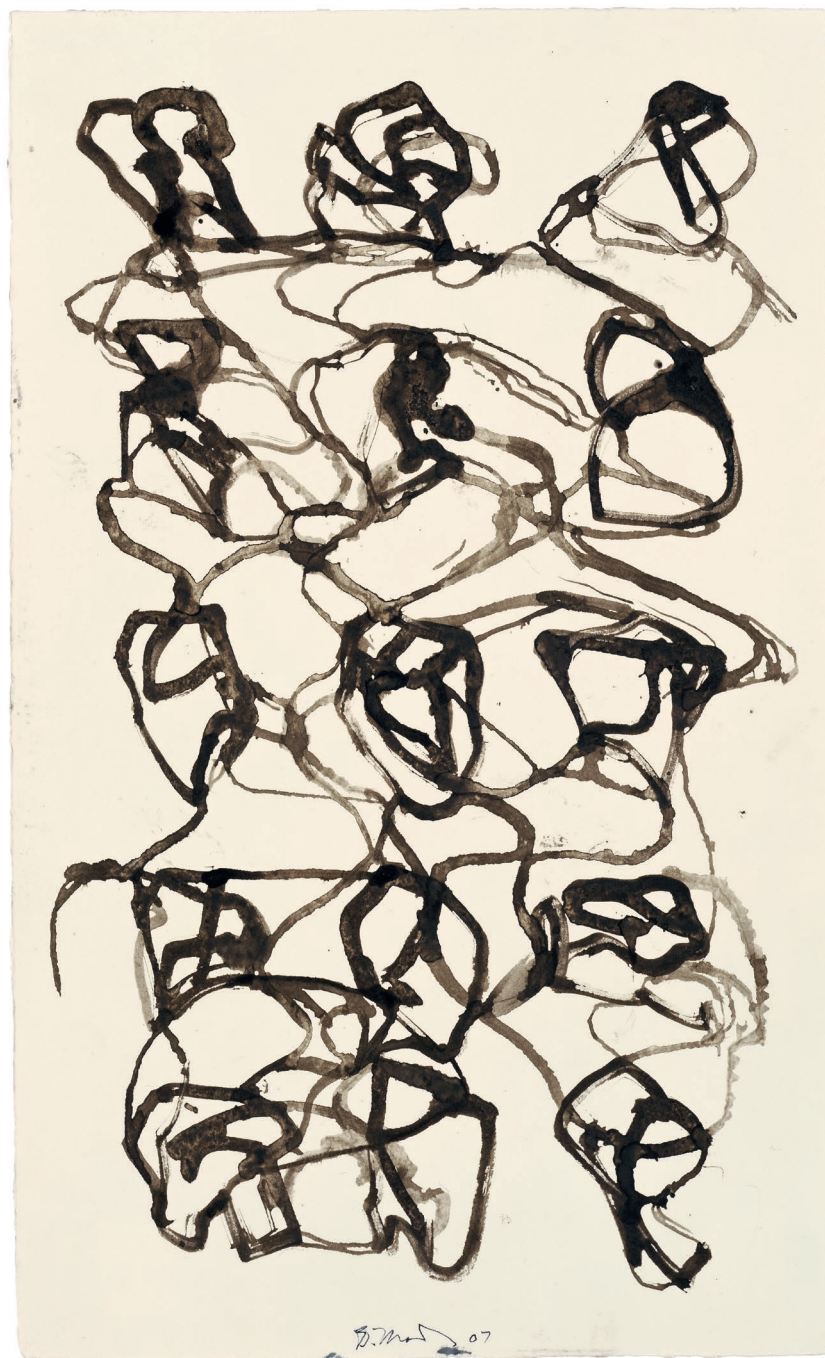
Brice Marden

Matthew Marks Gallery

Eastern Moss, 2010–15. Oil on linen, nine joined panels. 24 x 162 inches; 61 x 411 cm







Stele Drawing 1, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 2, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 3, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 4, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 5, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 6, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 7, 2007. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 8, 2007. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 9, 2007. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Steele Drawing 10, 2007. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 11, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 12, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm



Stele Drawing 13, 2007. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 inches; 38 x 23 cm

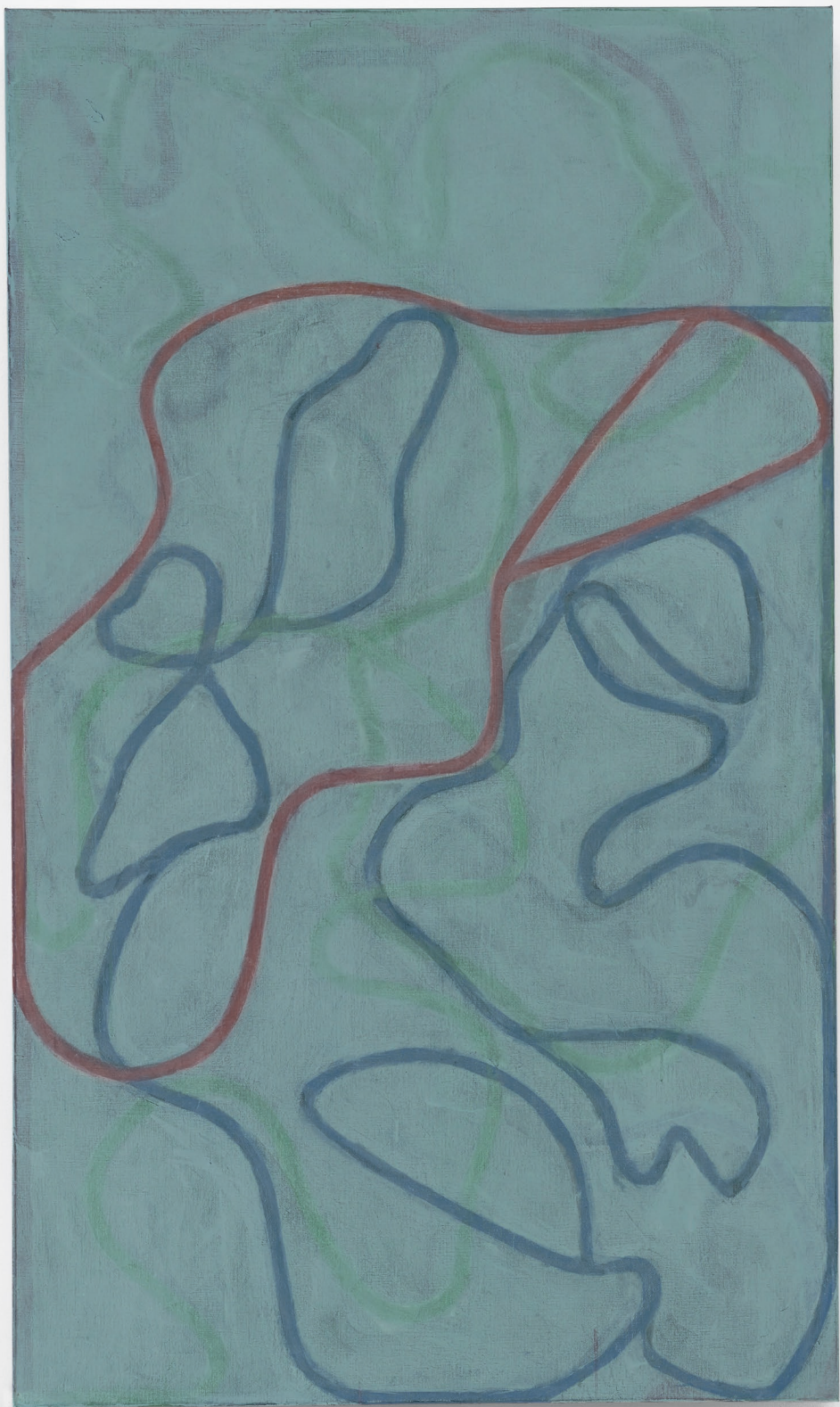
Nevis Stele, 2007–15. Oil on linen. 60 x 36 inches; 152 x 91 cm



Nevis Stele 2, 2007–15. Oil on linen. 60 x 36 inches; 152 x 91 cm



Nevis Stele 3, 2007–15. Oil on linen. 60 x 36 inches; 152 x 91 cm



Nevis Stele 4, 2007–15. Oil on linen. 60 x 36 inches; 152 x 91 cm



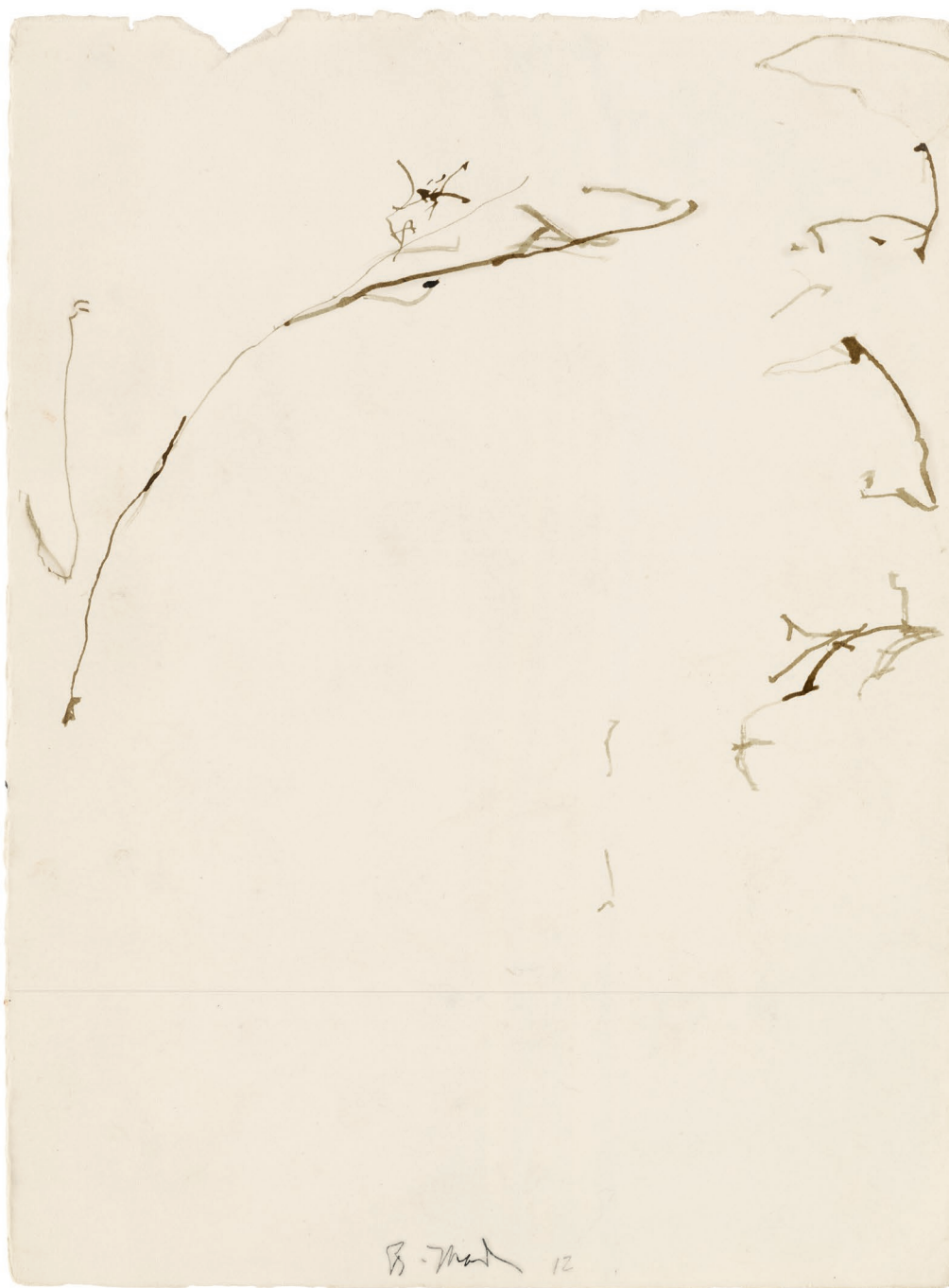
Nevis Stele 5, 2007–15. Oil on linen. 60 x 36 inches; 152 x 91 cm



Uphill 4, 2014. Oil on linen, four joined panels. 48 x 144 inches; 122 x 366 cm



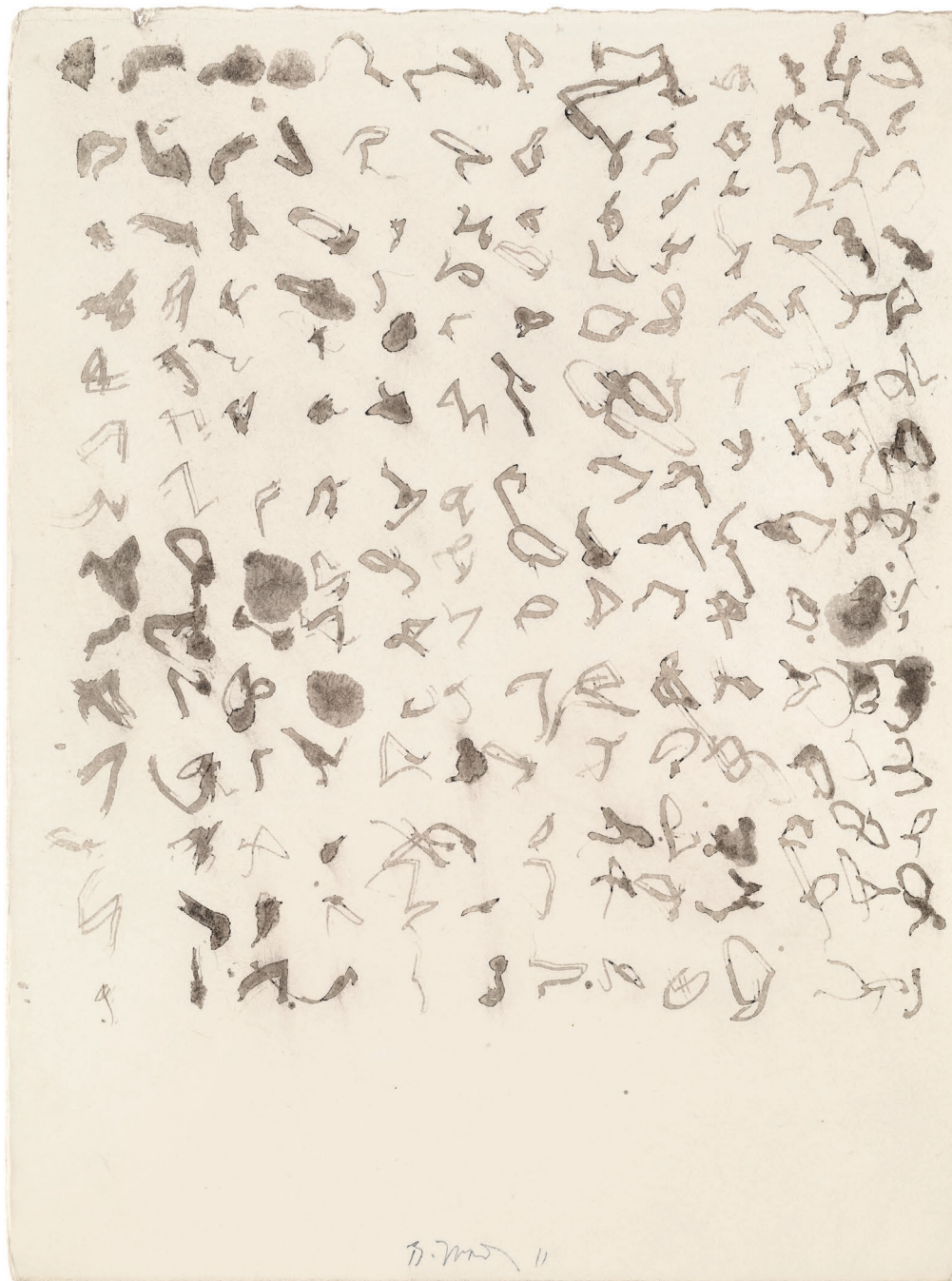




African Drawing 1, 2012. Kremer ink and graphite on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing Group (African Drawing 2), 2011. Kremer ink, Kremer white shellac ink, and graphite on Rives BFK paper. 15 x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



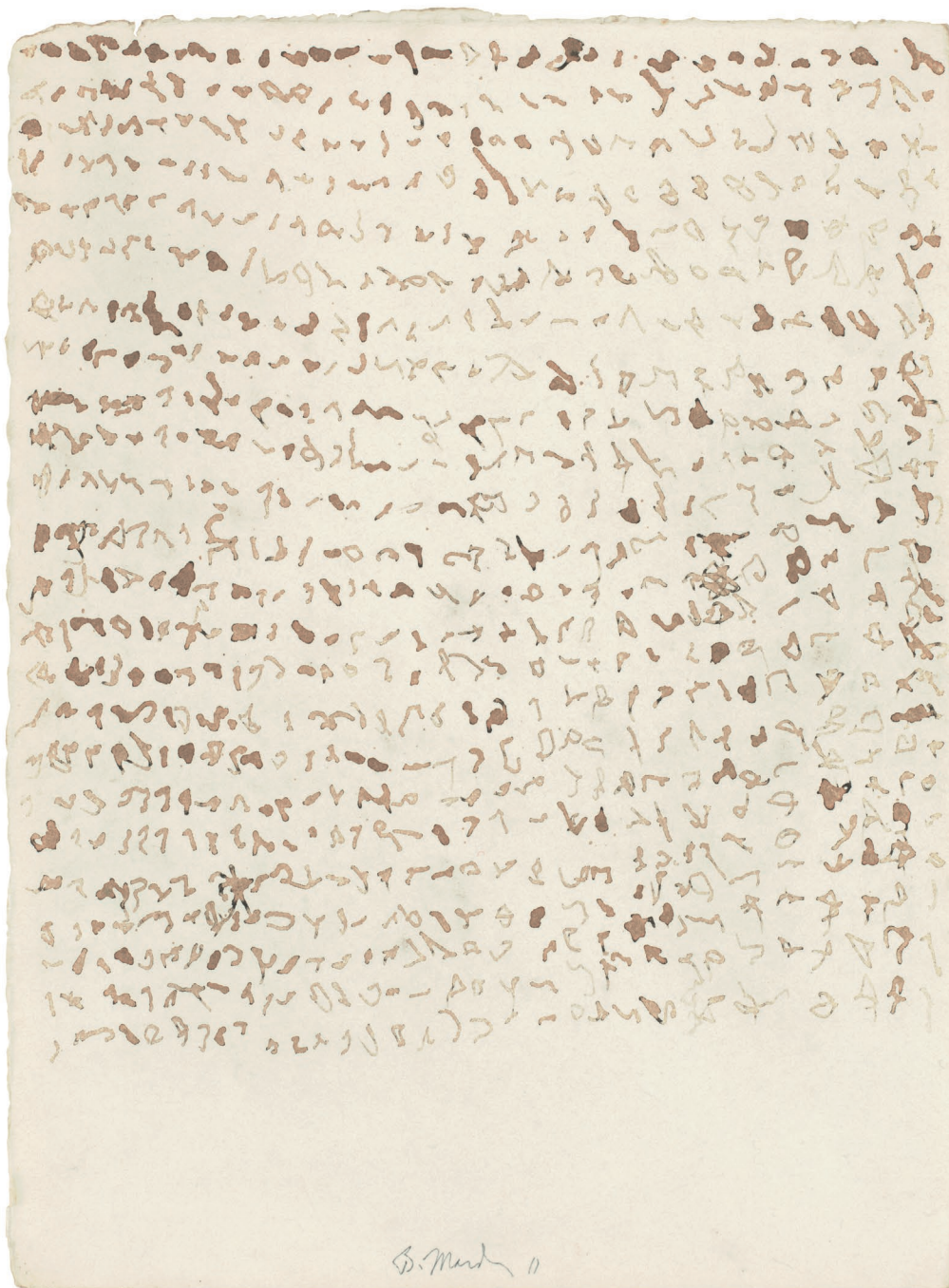
African Drawing Group (African Drawing 3), 2011. Kremer ink on two stacked sheets of Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



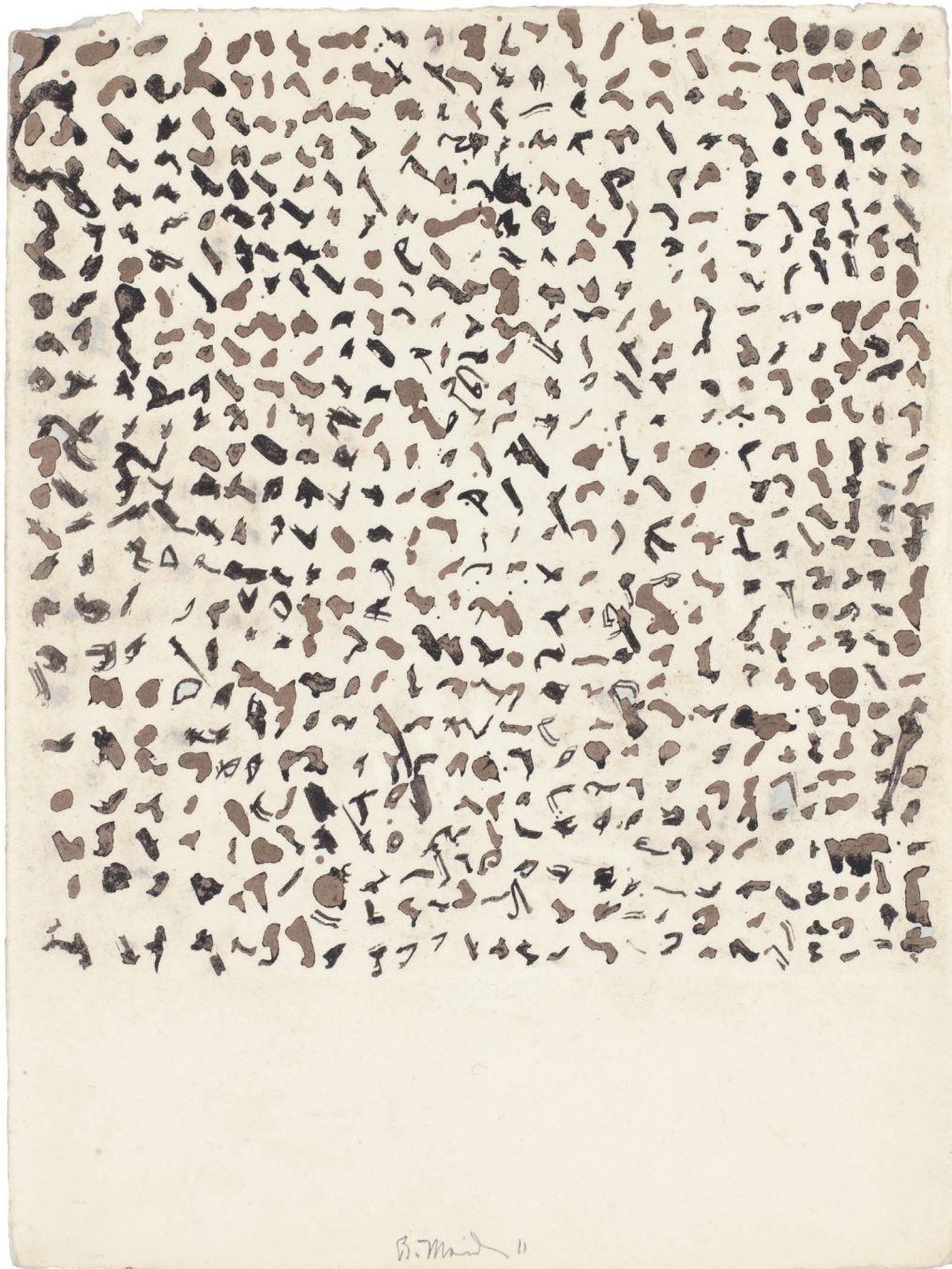
African Drawing Group (African Drawing 4), 2011. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



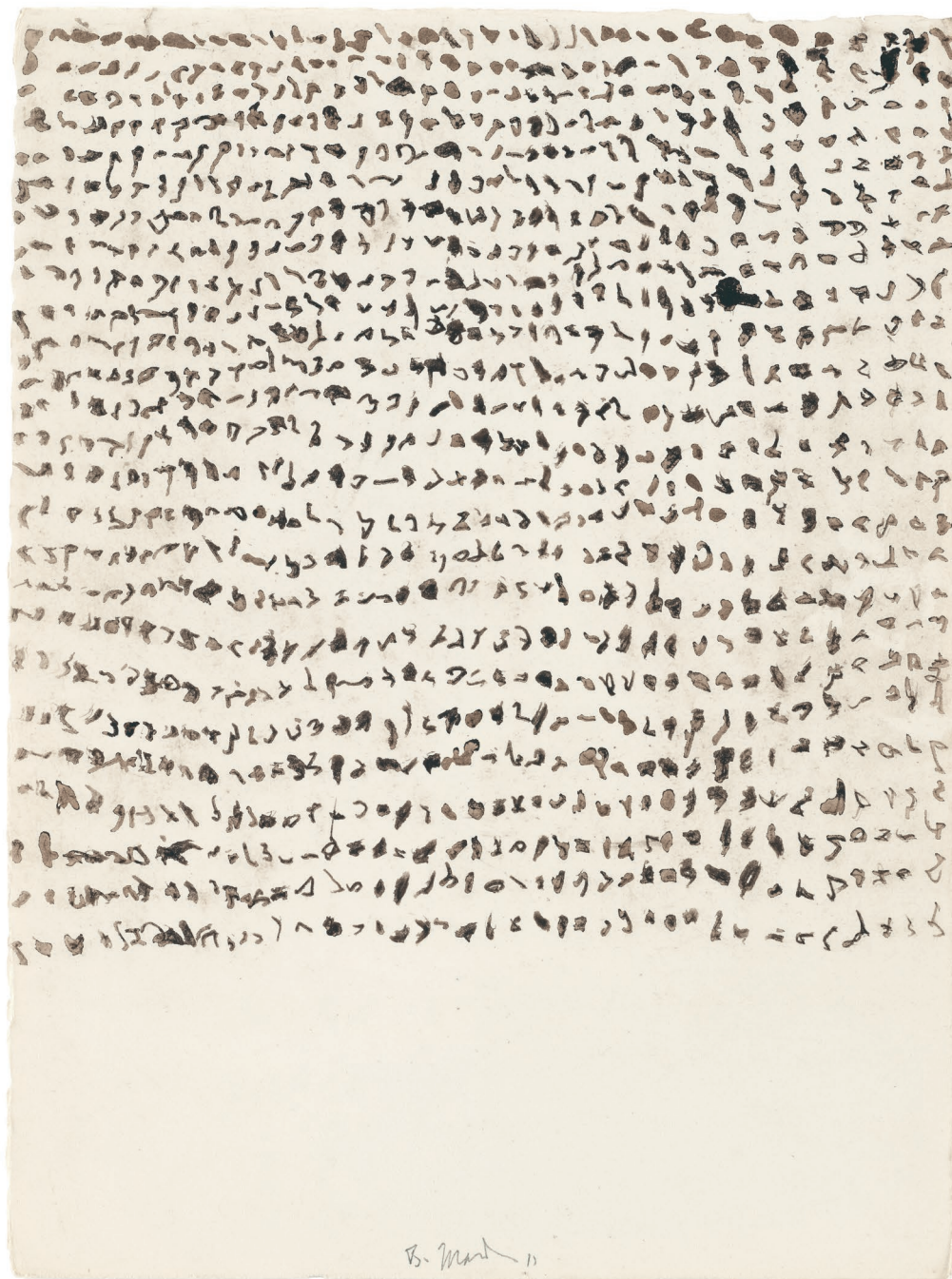
African Drawing Group (African Drawing 5), 2011. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 3/4 x 11 inches; 38 x 28 cm



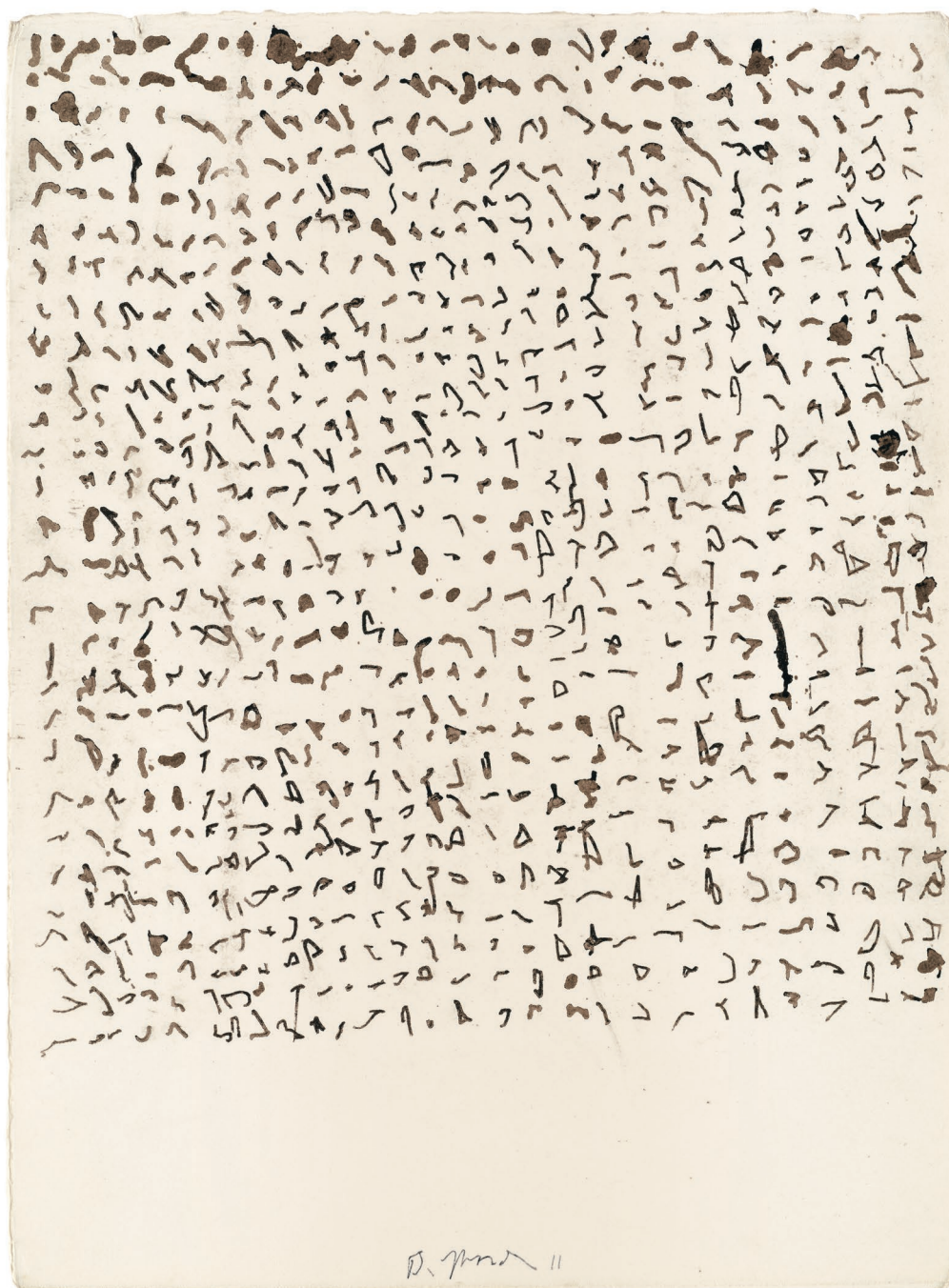
African Drawing 6, 2011. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



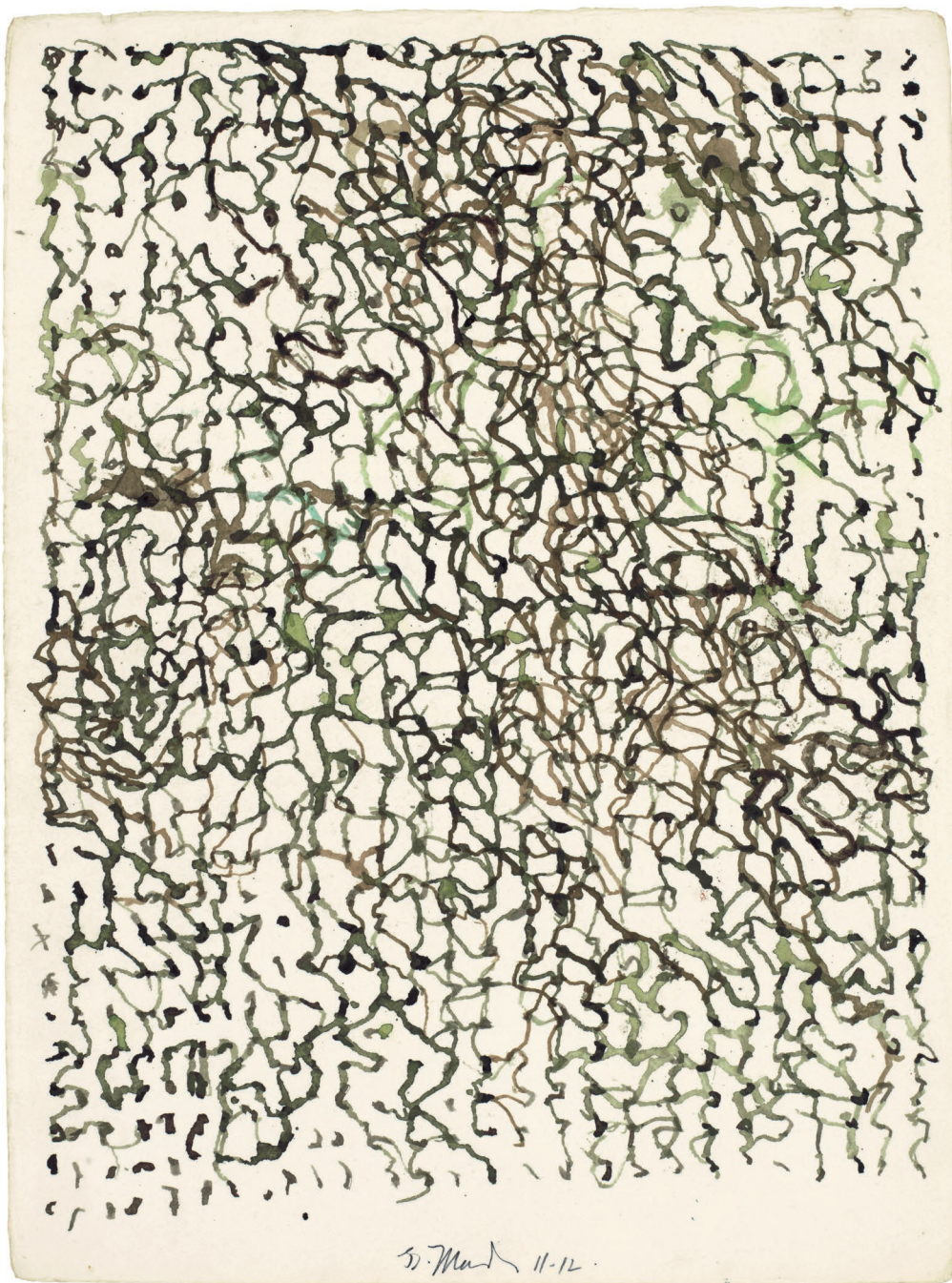
African Drawing 7, 2011. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing Group (African Drawing 8), 2011. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



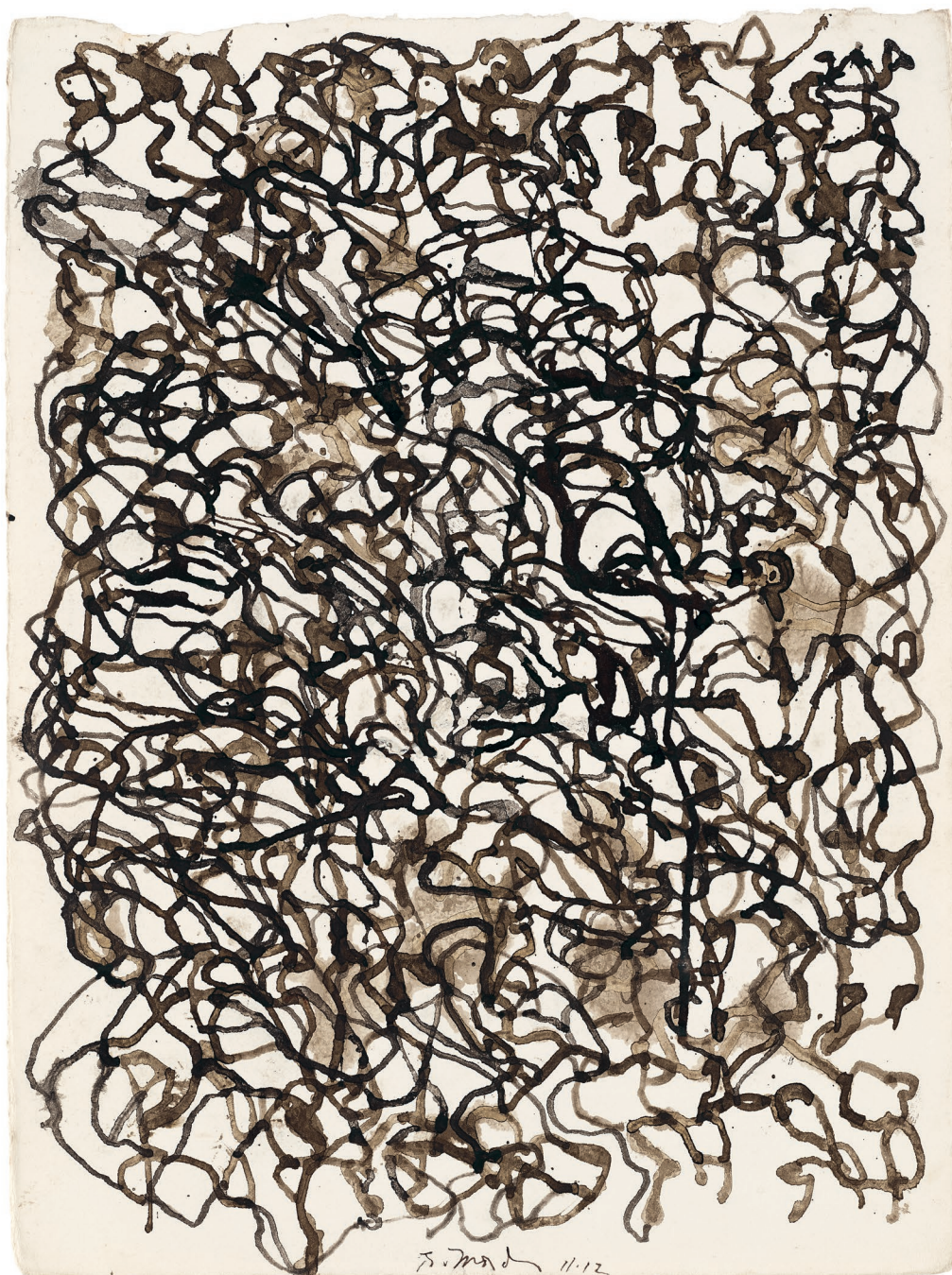
African Drawing Group (African Drawing 9), 2011. Kremer ink on two stacked sheets of Rives BFK paper. 15 x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing 10, 2011–12. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



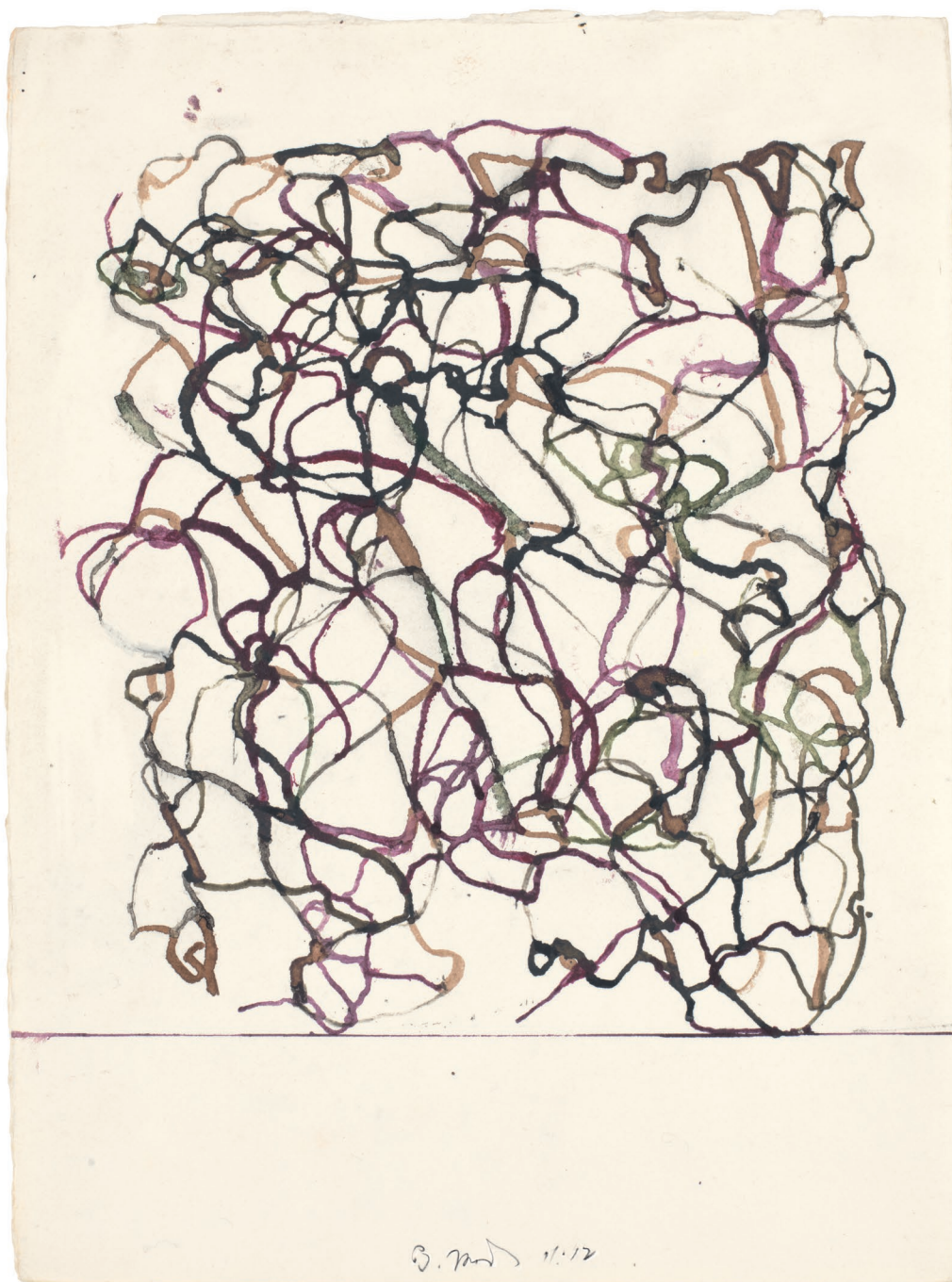
African Drawing 11, 2011–12. Kremer ink, Kremer white shellac ink, and graphite on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing 12, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



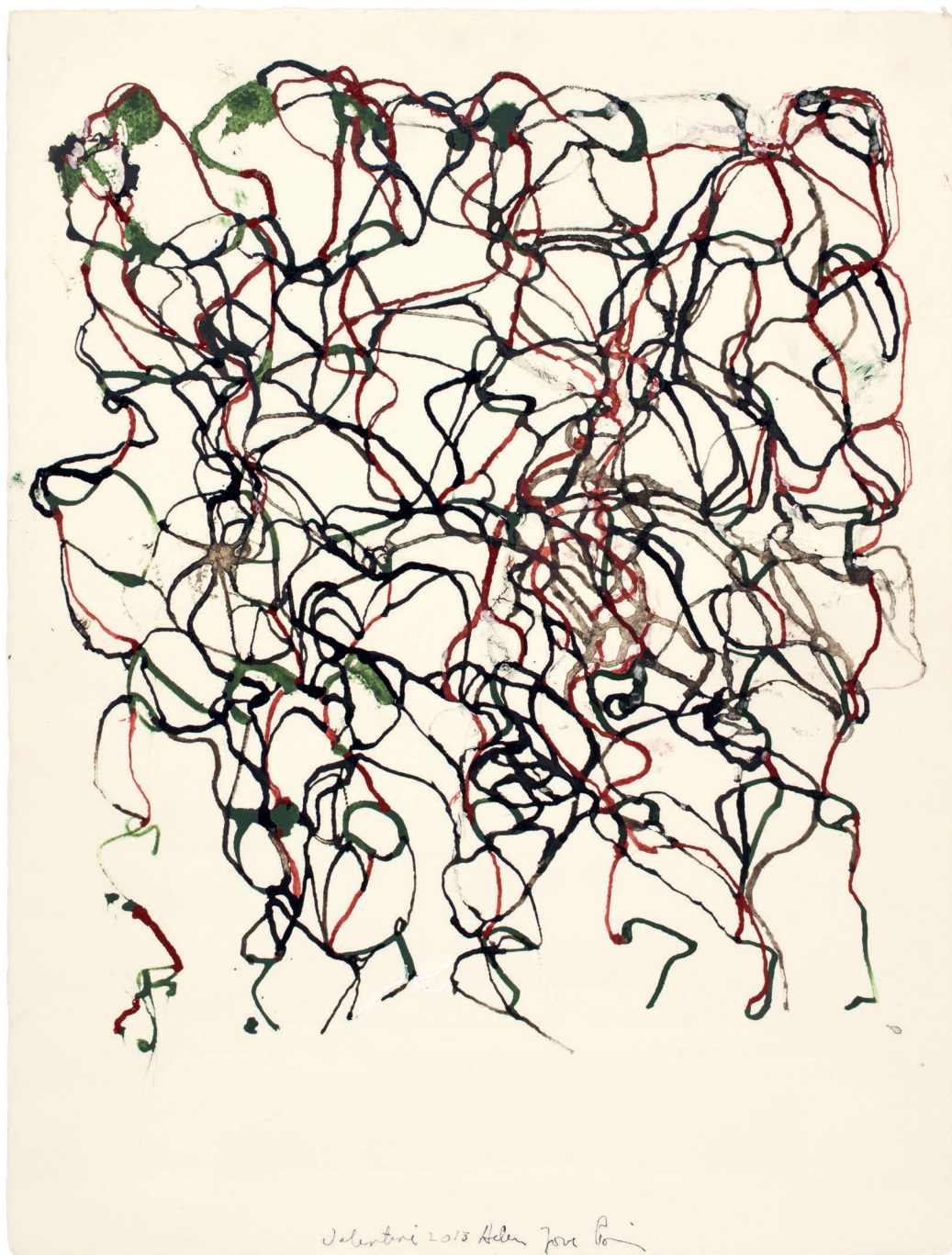
African Drawing 13, 2012. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing 14, 2011–12. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing 15, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14¾ x 11 inches; 38 x 28 cm



Valentine Drawing (African Drawing 16), 2013. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 inches; 37x 28 cm



African Drawing 17, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



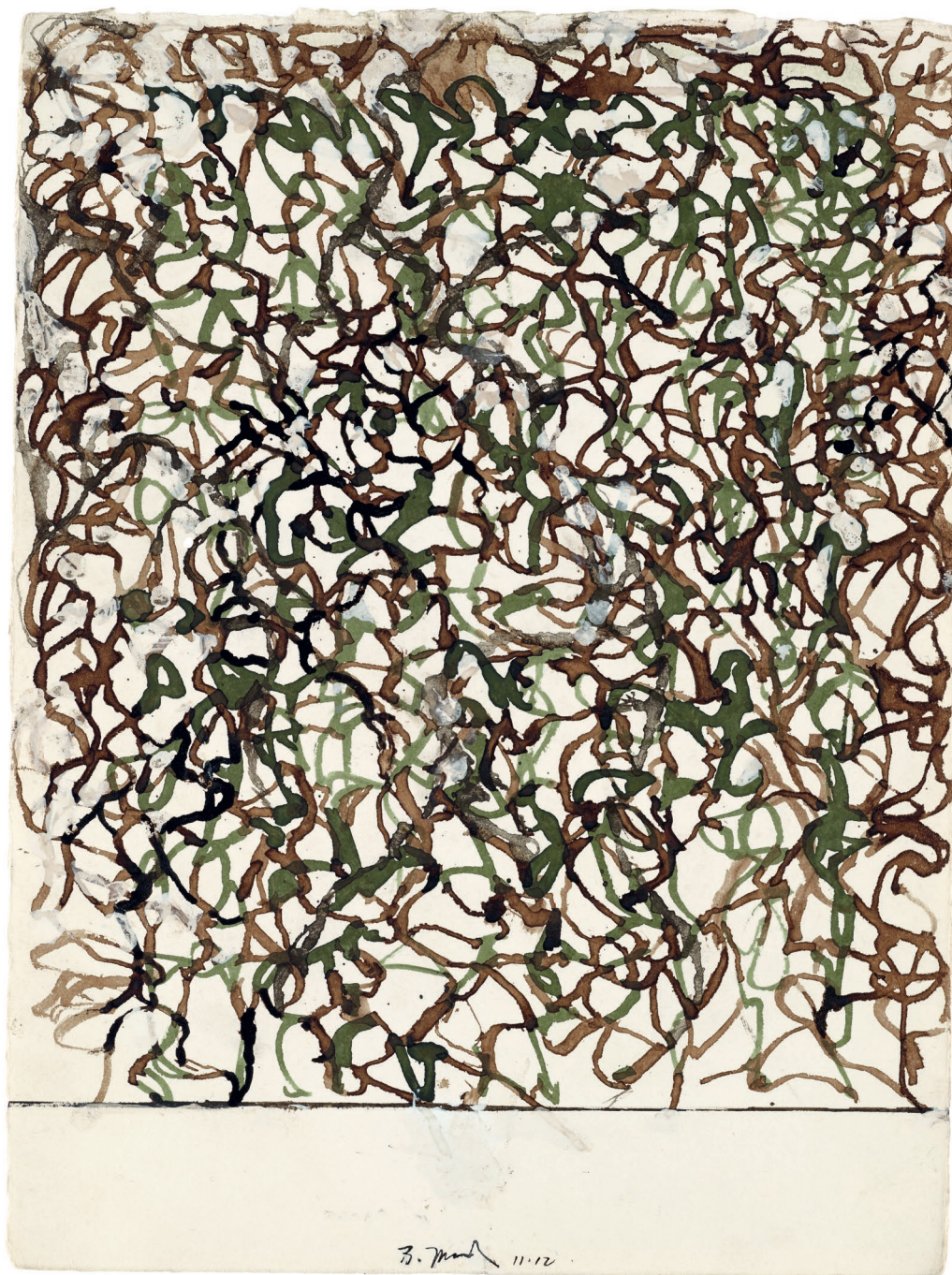
African Drawing 18, 2011–12. Kremer ink, Kremer white shellac ink, and graphite on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 inches; 38 x 28 cm



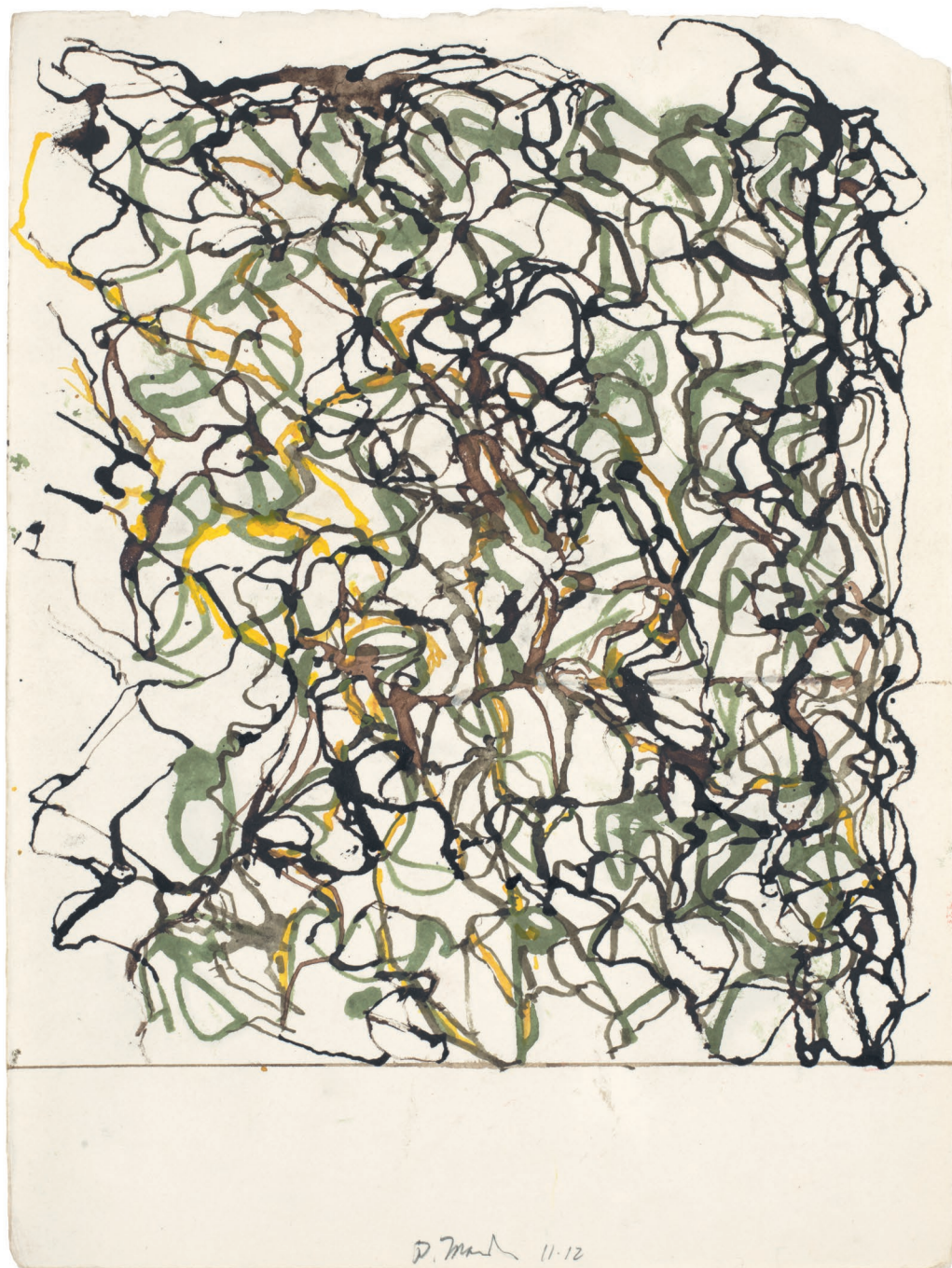
African Drawing 19, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing 20, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 15 x 11 inches; 38 x 28 cm



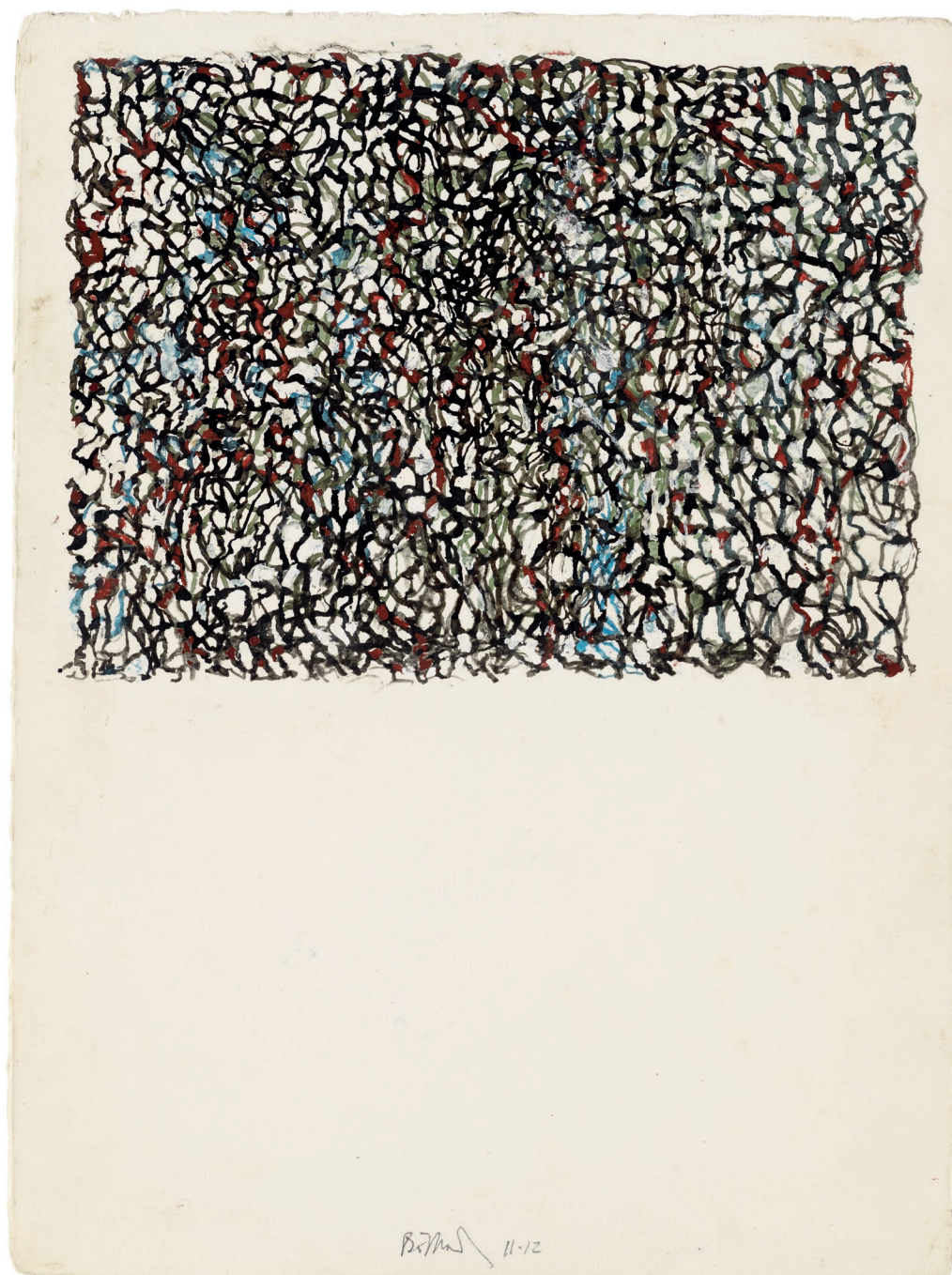
African Drawing 21, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing 22, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm



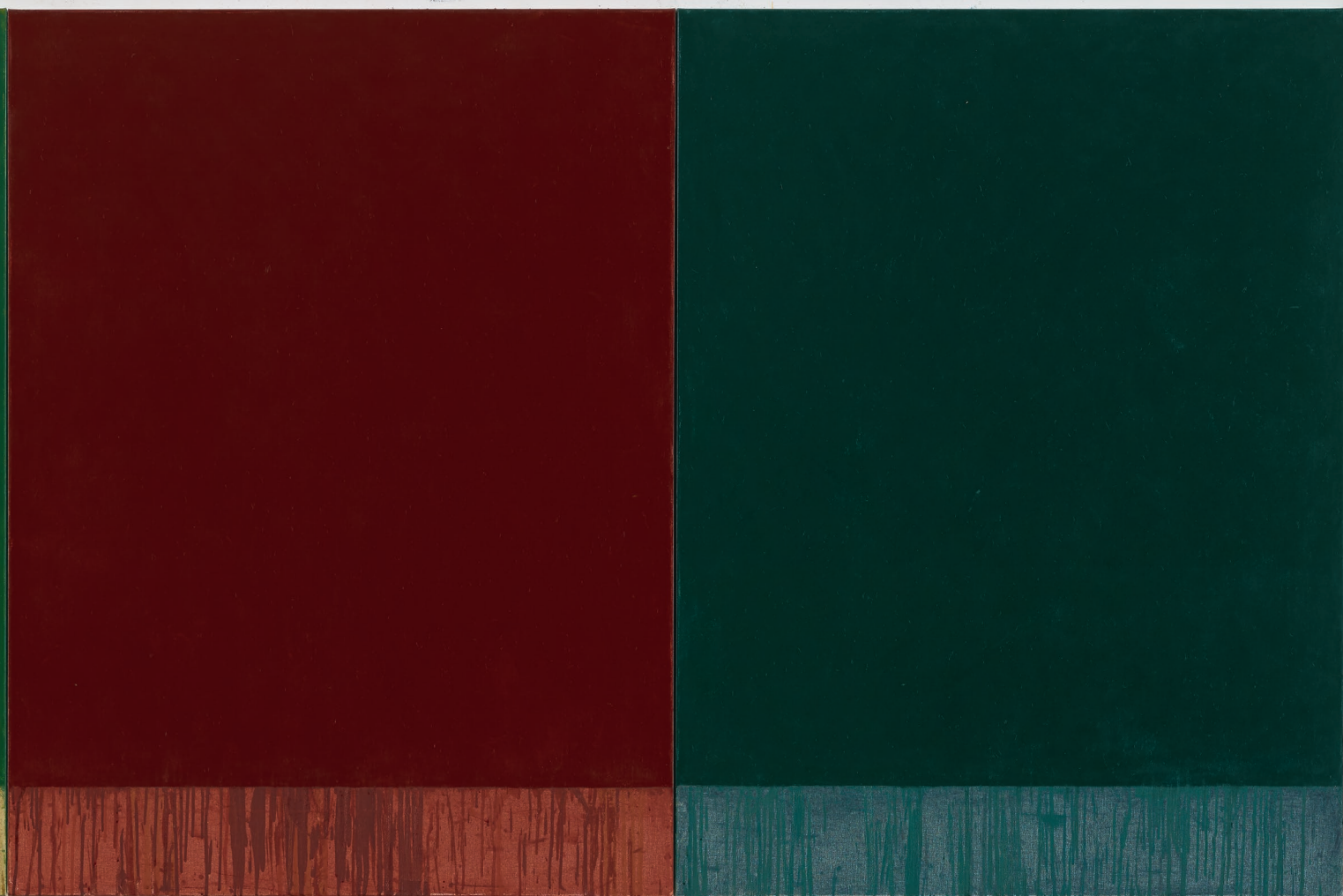
African Drawing 23, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on Rives BFK paper. 15 x 11 inches; 38 x 28 cm



African Drawing 24, 2011–12. Kremer ink and Kremer white shellac ink on two stacked sheets of Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 38 x 28 cm

River 4, 2014. Oil on linen, four joined panels. 48 x 144 inches; 122 x 366 cm



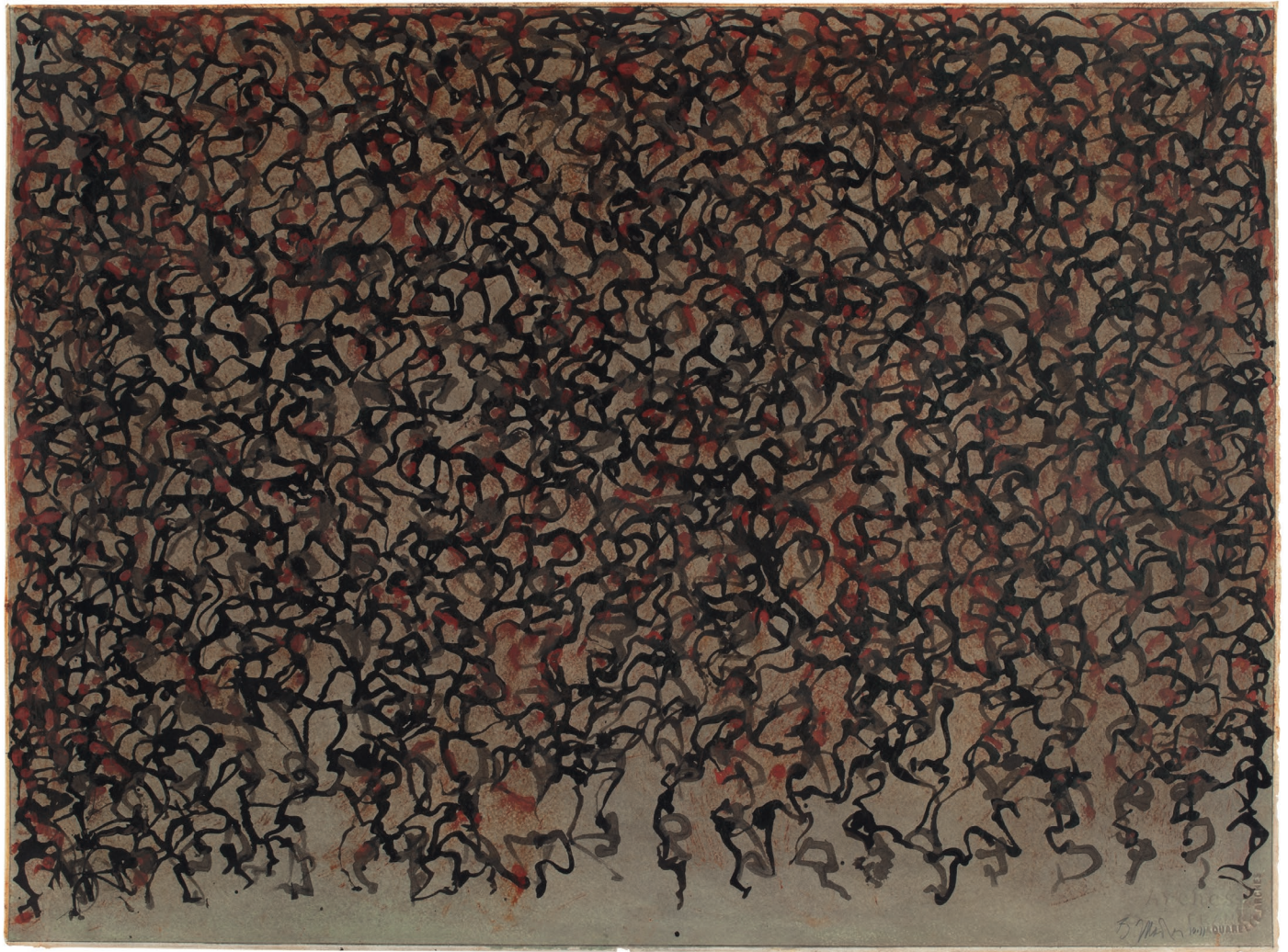




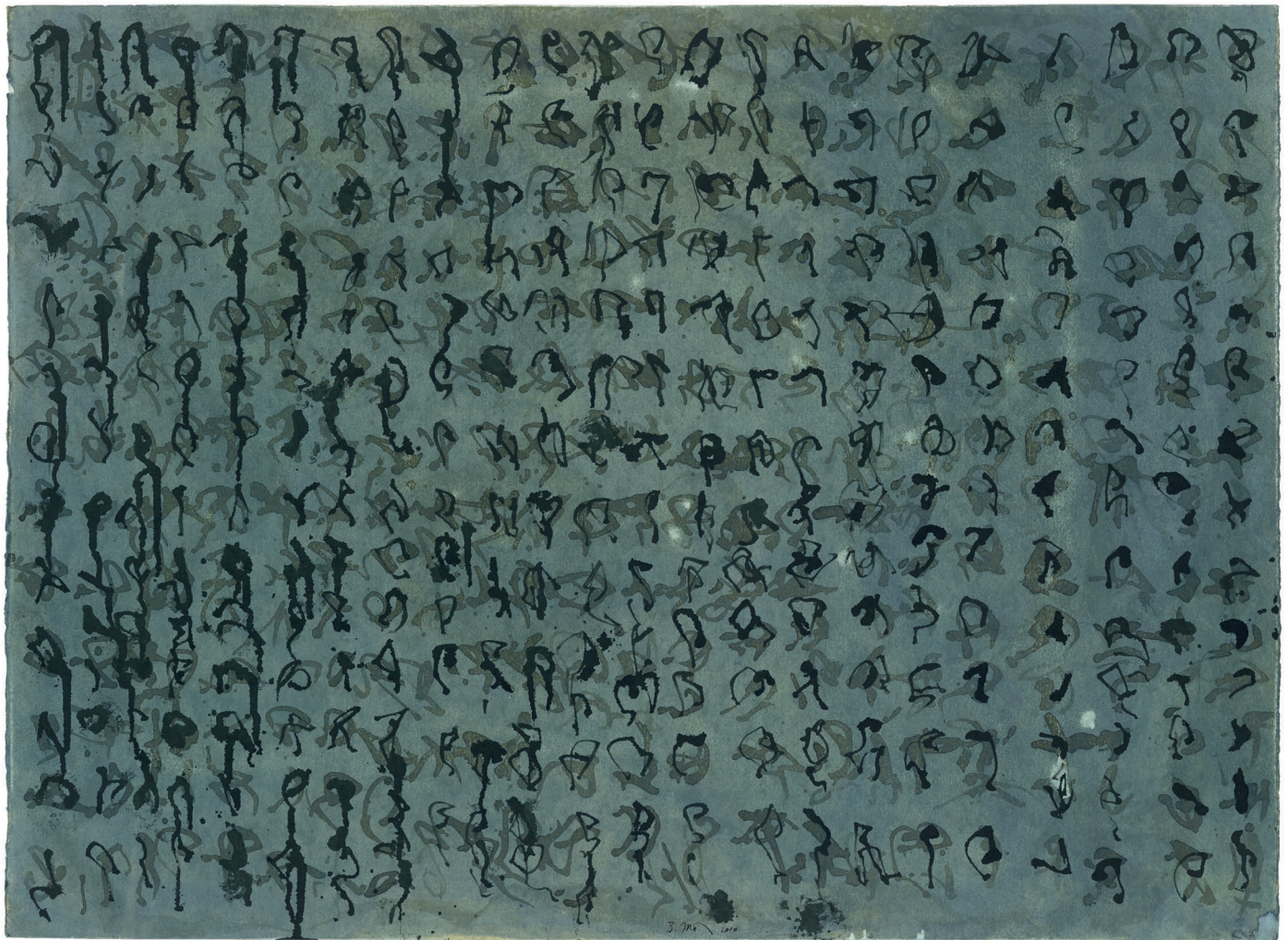
9 x 15 *Sutra (Nevis)*, 2009–12. Kremer ink on Arches paper. 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; 58 x 78 cm



Double Square Sutra (Nevis), 2009–12. Kremer ink on Arches paper. 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; 58 x 78 cm



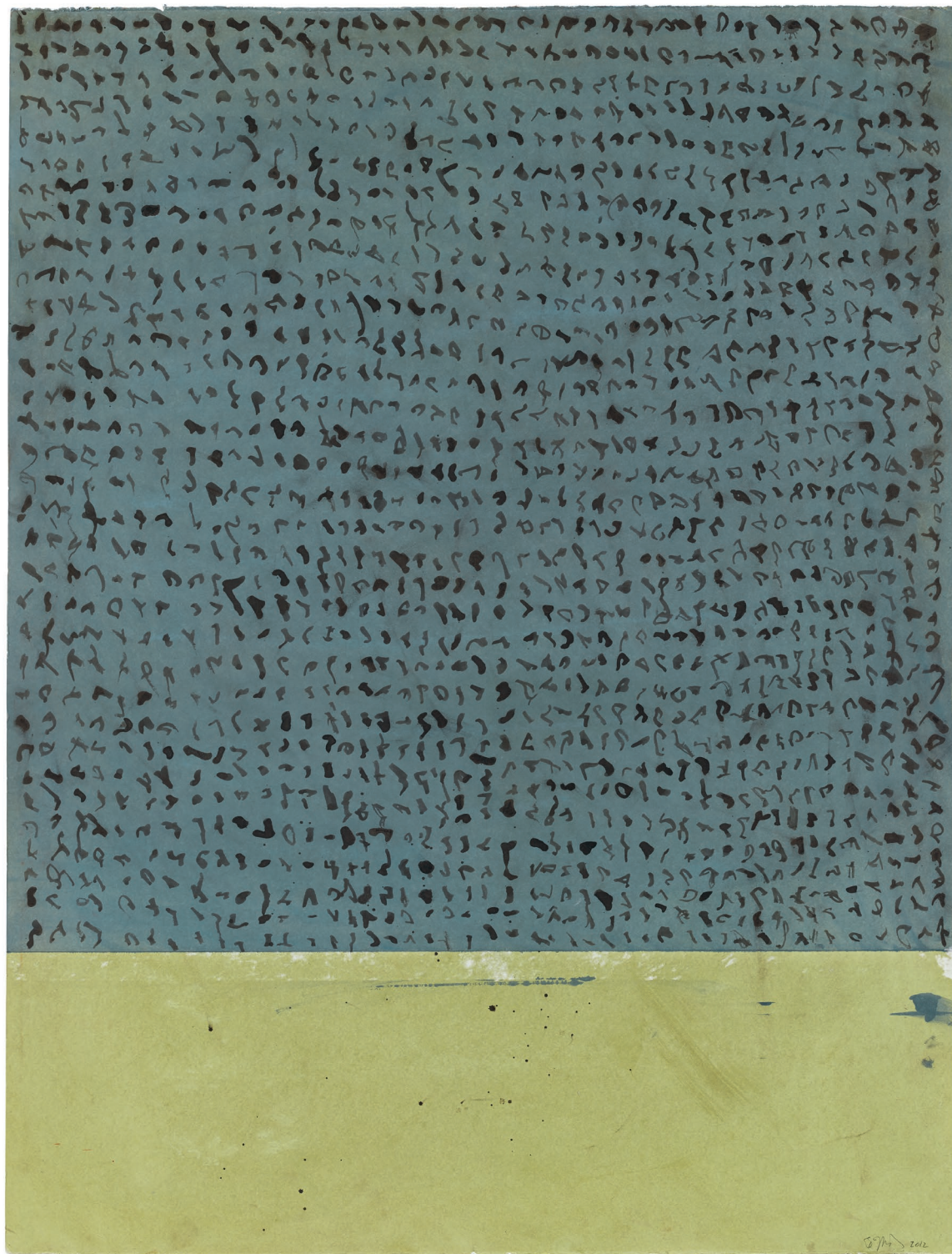
Moss in Spring, 2010–11. Kremer ink on Arches paper. 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; 57 x 77 cm



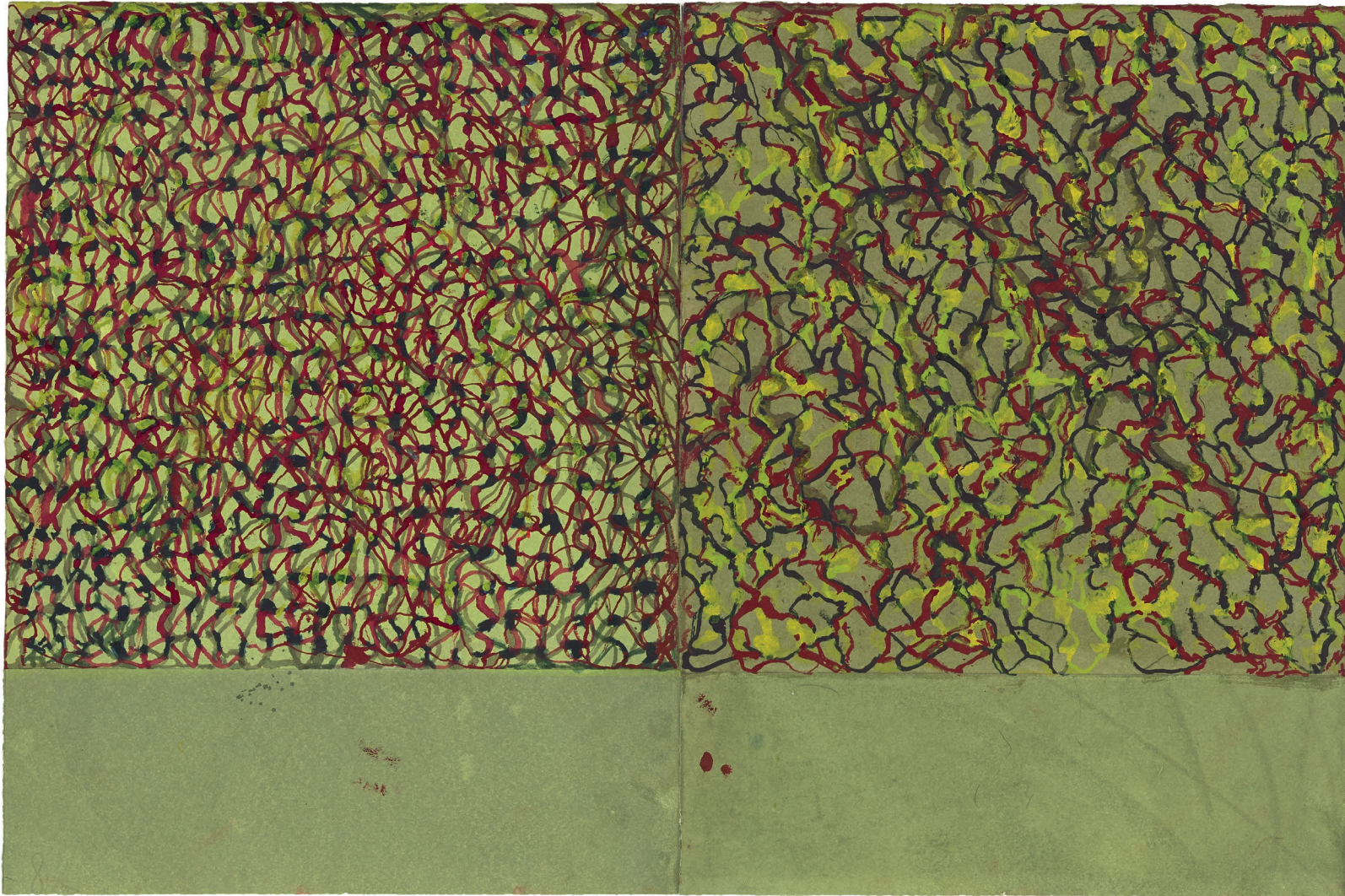
Blue Sutra, 2010. Ink on paper. 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 41 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 77 x 105 cm

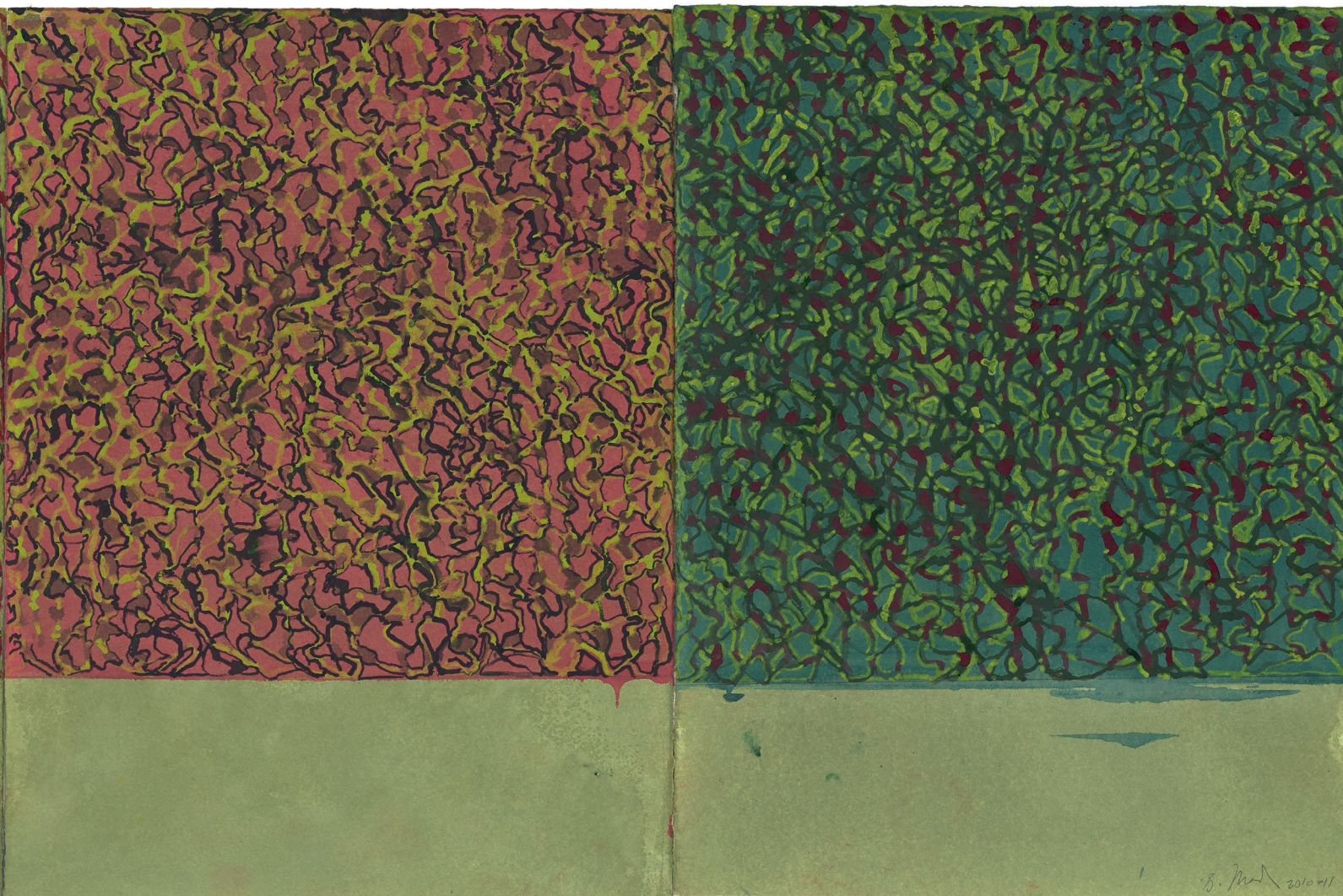


Sutra Drawing, 2010–11. Ink on paper. 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 41 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; 77 x 105 cm



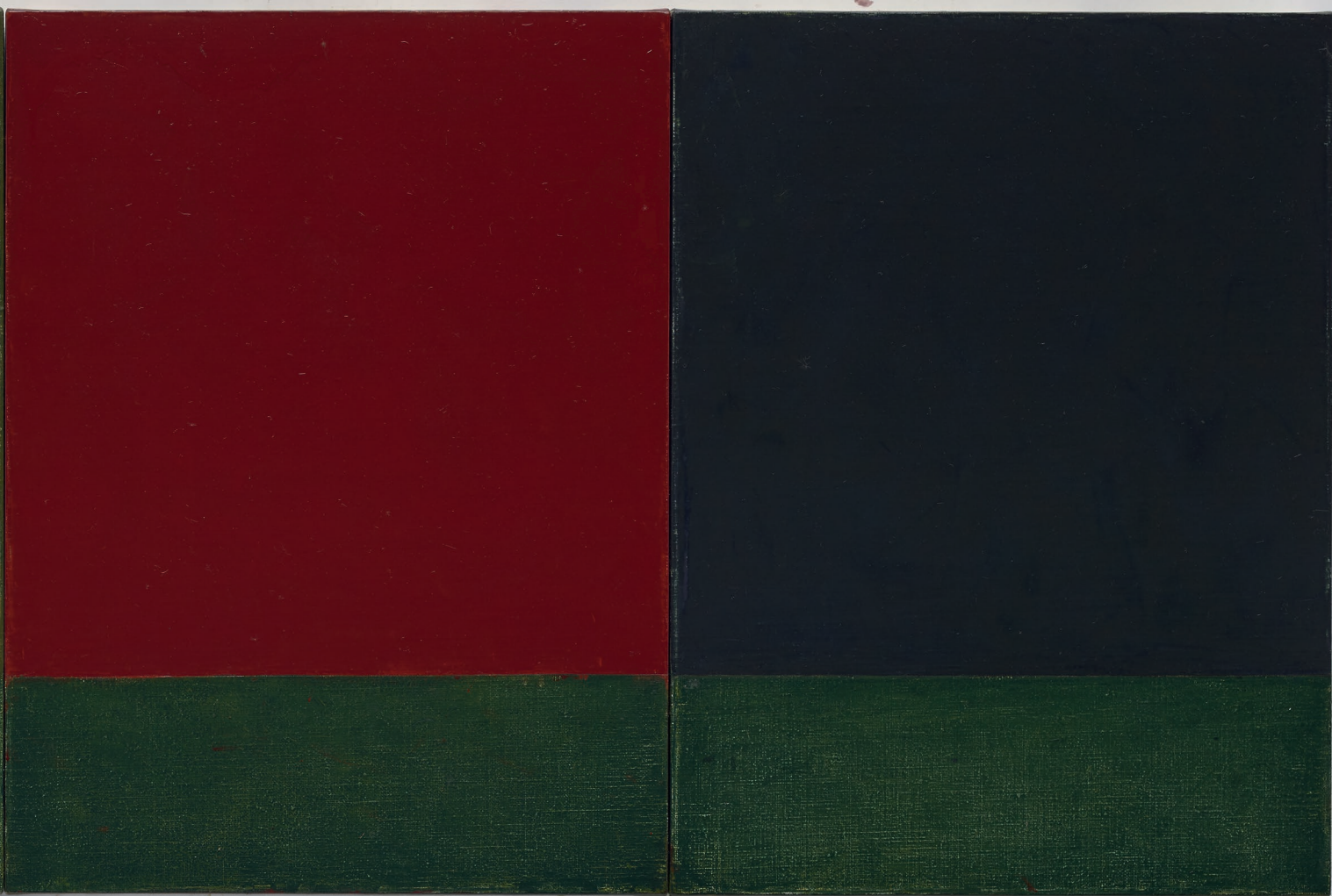
Upstate Grey, 2012. Graphite and Kremer ink on Arches paper. 41 x 31 inches; 104 x 79 cm





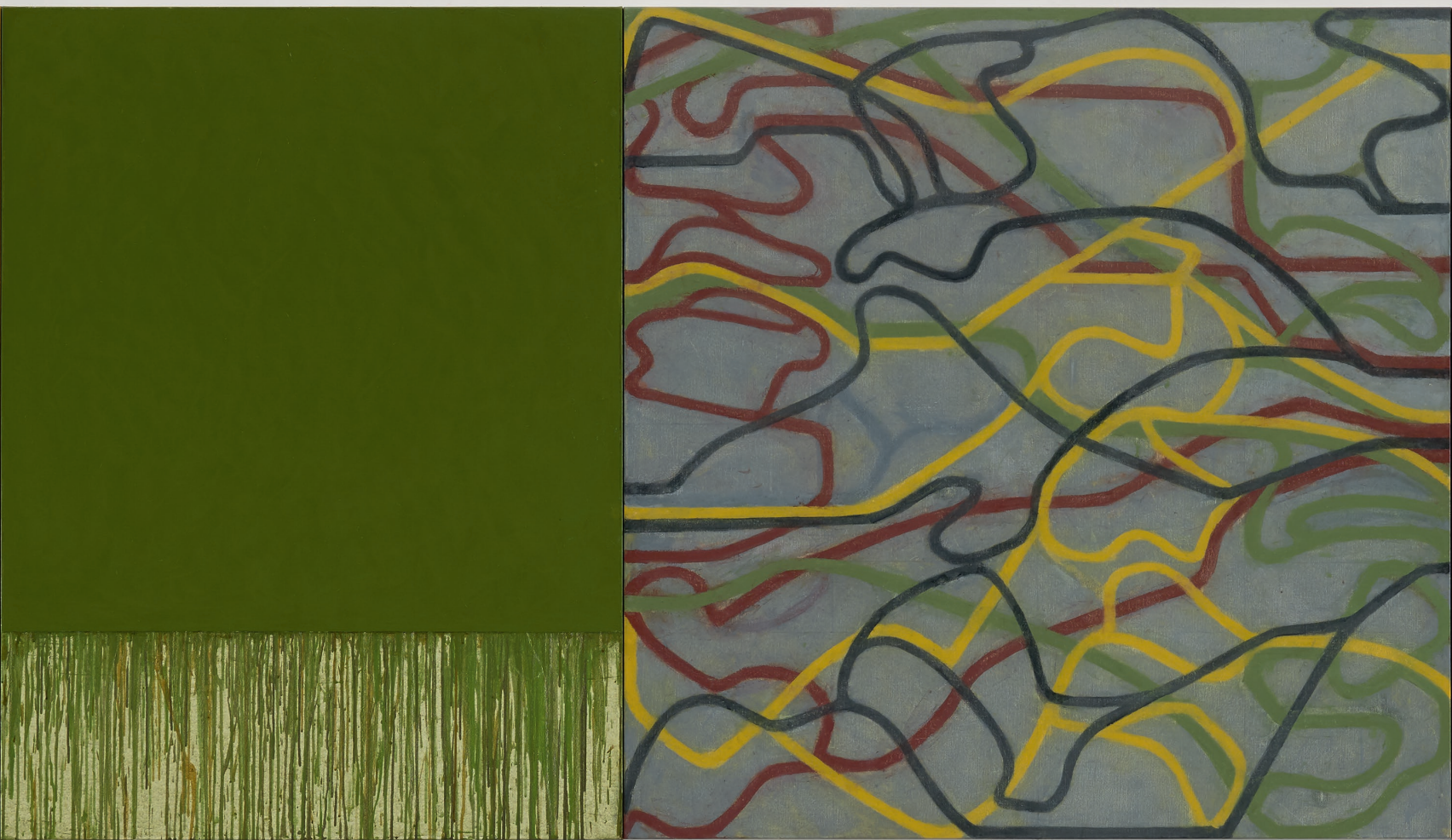
Early Seasons, 2010–11. Kremer ink on Rives BFK paper, four joined sheets. 17½ x 13 inches; 45 x 133 cm
 Following spread: *Small Seasons*, 2012–15. Oil on linen, four joined panels. 24 x 72 inches; 61 x 183 cm

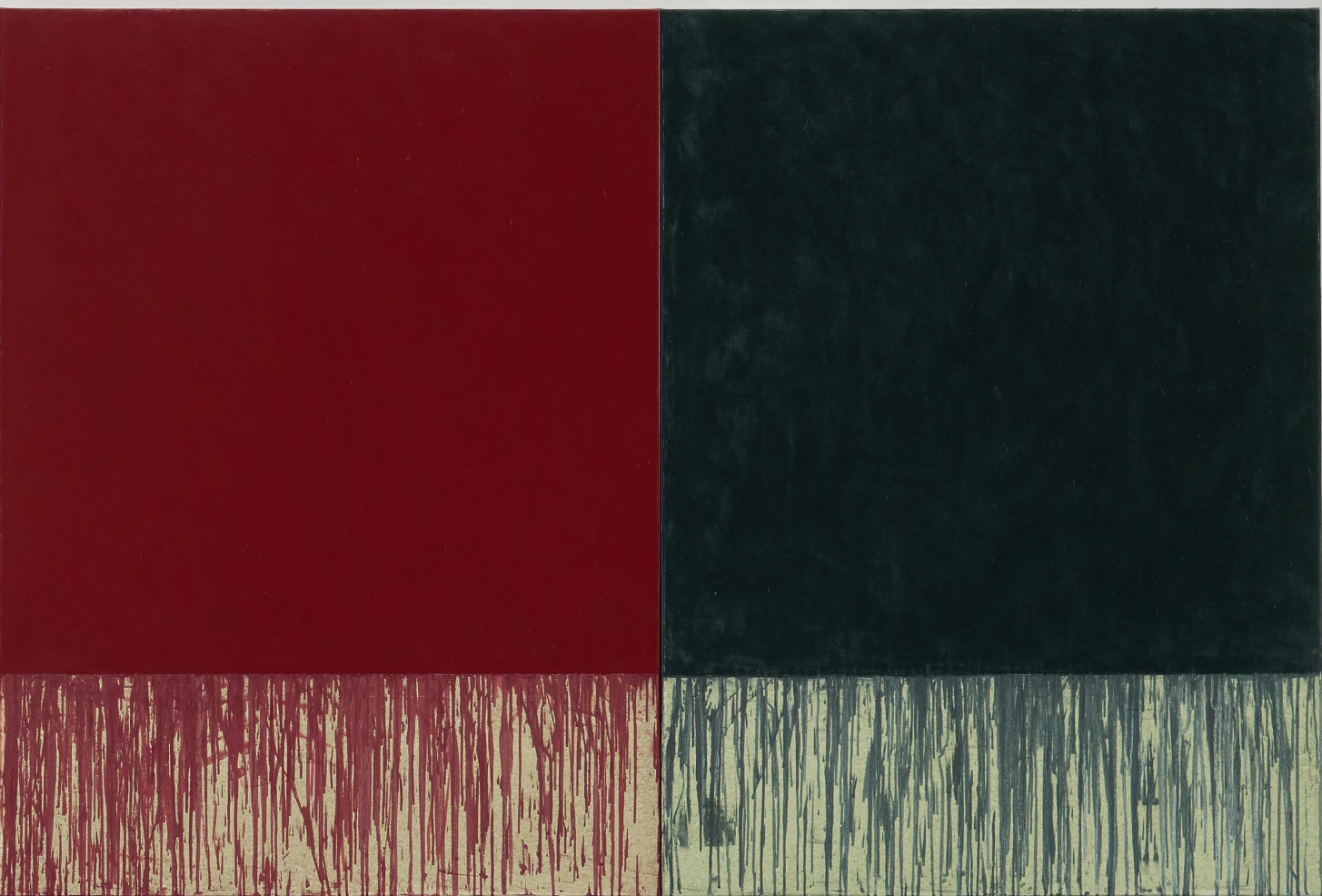




Uphill with Center, 2012–15. Oil on linen, five joined panels.
48 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 192 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches; 122 x 489 cm





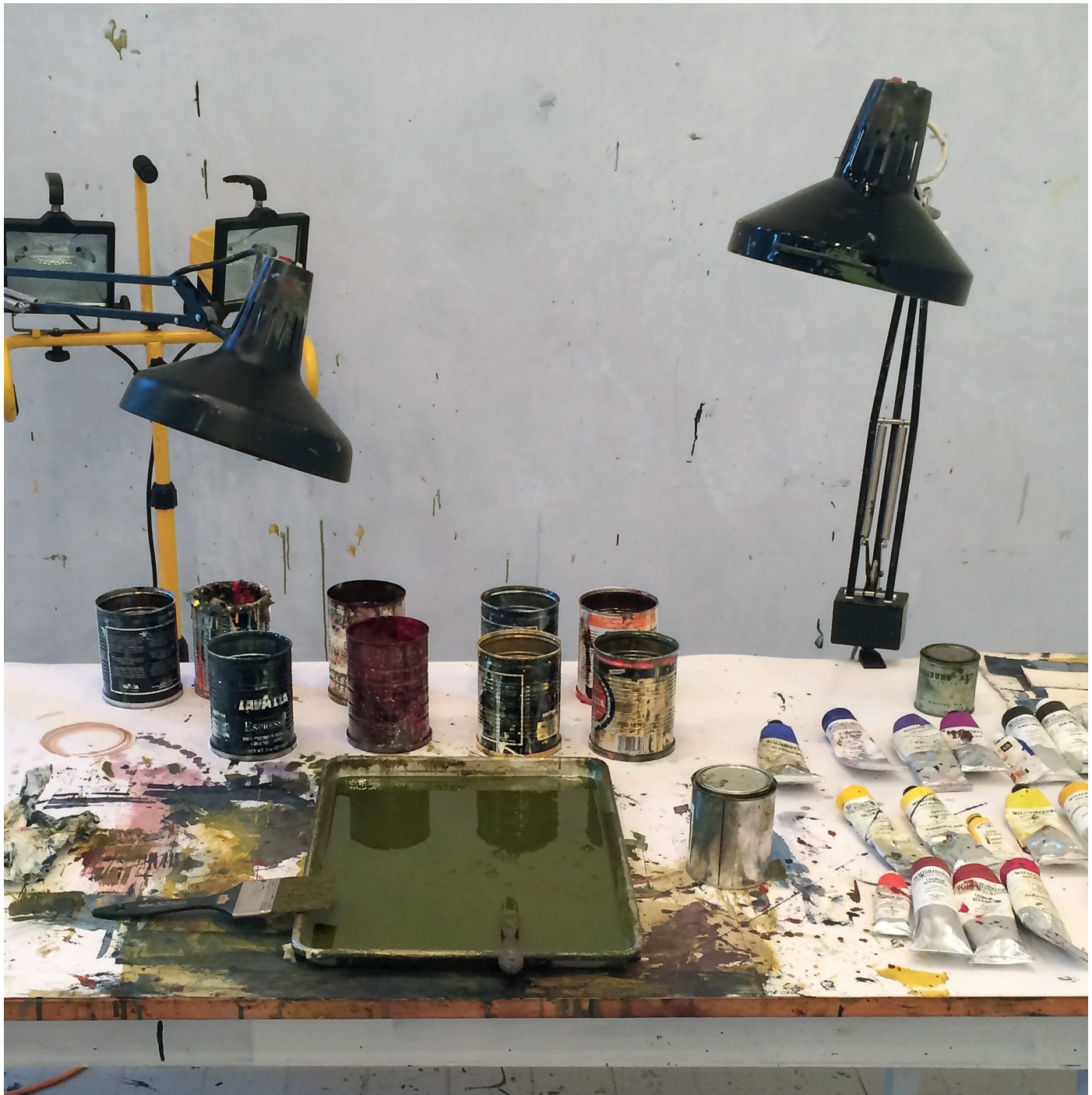


Over Autumn, 2015. Oil on linen. 96 x 72 inches; 244 x 183 cm



Summer Square, 2015. Oil on linen. 98¼ x 74¼ inches; 250 x 187 cm





Brice Marden's studio, Tivoli, New York, 2015

BRICE MARDEN IN CONVERSATION WITH MATT CONNORS

Tivoli, New York, June 2015

CONNORS: I've read all these interviews of yours, and not necessarily in chronological order, so I've been finding your ideas at different points in your experience. And it's amazing, after time-traveling through the interviews, to see this new body of work, which to me feels like — not a taking stock, but like you have a different toolbox with all these ideas at the ready. Does it feel that way to you?

MARDEN: I've been working on a large painting for almost five years, and during that time it has consumed most of my attention. Things come up that are not necessarily directly useable, so you spin them off. Somewhere along the way the square lured me into its web, as did the search for an image coming up out of a space. I accepted the emergence of monochrome as, in itself, the emergence of image. Number as subject got some exploration. Also paint as shamanistic material. All of this is just part of the ongoing studio practice.

CONNORS: In the monochrome *Uphill 4* (2014) one of panels has a different finish than the other three. It changes the space, making that panel seem either smaller or larger than the others. It interrupts the painting's space in a way I think is interesting. And then there's the zone along the bottom — like the one in your early monochromes, but larger. How did you arrive at it in this painting?

MARDEN: It had to do with the set of paintings I'd done just before, the *Letters* (2006–11). They had borders along the sides, which was based on the way Chinese calligraphy is often mounted on wider panels. Plus it gave me another color element to work with, and the added element of "what is where?"

CONNORS: You've also built in a negative lower space in a lot of the *African Drawings*. So maybe it's a structural idea that was floating around.

MARDEN: Yes, I think a lot of it comes out of Rothko, the rectangle that's higher rather than lower.

CONNORS: In the older graphite drawings, too, it feels like there's an imaginary function for that space, as if the rectangle gets slotted in from the bottom. In the work *No Mask* (2012), though, the larger rectangle is a square, and it's closer to the bottom. By the way, when I heard that title I immediately thought of Noh theater.

MARDEN: *No Mask* isn't involved in Noh theater, although it looks it. It was done in Pennsylvania, and I was listening to a lot of John Coltrane at the time. It could be considered a preface to the works in this exhibition. The square appeared, and for the first time it represented potential rather than a given perfection.



Letter About Rocks #3, Blue Ground, 2007–10. Oil on linen. 72 x 96 inches; 183 x 244 cm

CONNORS: In the painting *River 4* (2014) there are tints in the lower area, but not in *Uphill 4*. How did that come about?

MARDEN: Well, they were the first colors.

CONNORS: So you covered the whole canvas, and then later you went back into it?

MARDEN: Right. I scraped down the paint.

CONNORS: Interesting. The transparent color calls into question the substance of the more heavily layered area above it.

MARDEN: What I like is the way the top area sits on the bottom. You can look at it as a simple block of color that's sitting on a floor, edge, ridge, stage.

CONNORS: Yes, and it almost looks like it could be a separate panel. Do you make any effort to compose or control the drips?

MARDEN: There are some places where I went in and tried to erase. But then I liked the erase, so I decided I'd just leave it. You were just talking about a different spatial read for a matte finish versus a shiny one, but there's nothing deliberate about that. What's deliberate is that I was trying to get the color right. These different surface finishes just started happening recently. I put my paint in trays and cover each one with cardboard, basically to keep the bugs out, but it's always slowly evaporating. I used to



No Mask, 2012. Kremer ink and oil on Rives BFK paper. 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; 38 x 22 cm

use terpineol to keep the finish flat, but now that I'm doing more layers it shines up with each layer.

I. Terre Verte

CONNORS: When you work on a painting for years, how do you keep the color going?

MARDEN: I just label the trays with the working title. And for a lot of paintings I keep track of how many layers there are. This painting *Eastern Moss* (2010–15) is all done with terre verte.

CONNORS: Wow. So the final color just depends on the number of layers?

MARDEN: It started out with really bright colors, and then I just started painting over them. With terre verte, the layers are so transparent. And you can get completely different reads depending on where you stand in the studio and which lights you turn on.

CONNORS: It has nine panels, the same as *Ru Ware Project* (2007–12).

MARDEN: And it's the same size. What I'd really like to do is a whole show.

CONNORS: So there's an entire body of work based around that color? It seems to be the muse for this painting.



Ticket, 2014–15. Oil and graphite on paper. $20\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{5}{8}$ inches; 52 x 37 cm

MARDEN: *Ticket* (2014–15) is the first terre verte piece where I applied the square to a random support. I did the same with *Marble Ticket* (2015). At times I feel I would like to paint everything terre vert. I use Williamsburg paint, which is made with real earth pigments. To me, using it involves harnessing some of the powers of the earth. Harnessing and communicating. With *Eastern Moss* I kept putting the same color on — the same color, the same color — but every time I put it on it was different. Each time it was this whole new light/color experience. It was — not a revelation, but a whole wonderful new experience.

CONNORS: I see what you mean.

MARDEN: So then you're thinking about yellow and green, a very formal color situation. But this doesn't look green.

CONNORS: Right. These panels come off very gold.

MARDEN: In the Renaissance they always started paintings with terre verte, as the underpainting.

CONNORS: Is it a change for you, this ritual gesture of reapplying a single color?

MARDEN: Yes. It's not far from the program, but it's a real shift. I won't always be painting like that. But I haven't before, and I'm having a really good time doing it.



Marble Ticket, 2015. Oil and graphite on marble. 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; 30 x 22 cm



Brice Marden's studio, Nevis, West Indies, 2015

II. Stele

CONNORS: Where do the five *Nevis Stele* paintings fit in chronologically?

MARDEN: They've been going for eight years. I work on them when I'm in Nevis. The whole project was that I would work on five paintings there, five paintings here in Tivoli, and five paintings in New York — all the same format and all starting with three lines of five characters. Everyone asks, "Is there a difference between the studios?" I figured if I had this single idea worked in three places, you'd see the difference.

Victor Segalen, a Belgian Orientalist, was a surgeon on a ship that stopped in the Marquesas shortly after Gauguin's death. When Gauguin's possessions were auctioned there, he bought some works and sent them to the south of France, which is where Matisse got to see them. But Segalen was mostly known for his writing. A friend gave me a book of his poems, *Stèle*. In Chinese temples, steles are stone tablets carved with religious instruction. So that's the idea — I have three different sets of *Stele* paintings in these different locations. And this set from Nevis is the only one I've finished so far.

CONNORS: They're so austere. I think they're beautiful. You said they started with three columns of five characters?

MARDEN: Yes.

CONNORS: But those characters are almost —



Nestorian Stele at Chongren Monastery,
Xi'an, China, 781. Limestone.
Height 110 inches; 279 cm

MARDEN: Practically all gone. Three paintings had much more color on them as they were being worked, and they just got more and more pared down. A lot of this came from painting things out. I would paint over these lines in grey, then I would paint over the whole thing with the same grey, and then go back and redo.

CONNORS: So you would paint them out individually and then paint the whole?

MARDEN: Yes.

CONNORS: The kind of figuration that's been slowly creeping into your work seems to come on strong here. Do you go back in and sharpen up the lines?

MARDEN: Yes. I put it on with a brush, scrape it, get the excess paint off, and then go ahead and redraw it. It's a matter of working with a longer brush to get some distance from it. Then you go in and you're right on top of it. Different focuses.

CONNORS: What struck me right away was that the lines running along the edges seem very purposeful in these paintings. There's no green in most of them, and then in one painting it pops out. How did these calligraphic lines originally come about?

MARDEN: The calligraphic work started after I did the Basel Cathedral window project in 1983. There was a big middle window with two windows on this side and two on that side. The center window was going to be all these things crossing, and those diagonals eventually enabled the whole calligraphic approach. They changed the space I was dealing with.

CONNORS: These new paintings are so pared down and so refined. They have the speed of the monochromes but in calligraphic form. It almost seems like you put a monochrome painting and a calligraphic painting in a centrifuge.

MARDEN: They're much more pared down. And I've left things in there that I ordinarily wouldn't leave.

CONNORS: Really?

MARDEN: I mean, a line just ends.

CONNORS: Yes, I was noticing that. And there are lines that change color.

MARDEN: I'm getting to a point now where I do things I ordinarily wouldn't have allowed myself to do. Now I'm a little bit older, so I figure I can do whatever I want.

CONNORS: I love that. Sometimes I can stand in front of someone's painting and imagine how a brush would have made it, recreating it in my head. But I like paintings that foil that, that slow down the read of the painting, or complicate it. Another unusual thing about these *Stele* paintings is their window/portal format.

MARDEN: Yes, the scale. The studio in Nevis is much smaller. My wife and I own a hotel there, and it has these units with a bedroom, bathroom, and porch. I just knocked a wall down and doubled the unit. Now it has a porch with a big table where I draw and look out

across a field. And beyond that there's the Caribbean. It's not that I'm drawing it, but it's a big help.

CONNORS: It's funny that these paintings were made in Nevis. They're so grey.

MARDEN: Yes, that's what I keep thinking.

CONNORS: That could be the interesting outcome of the experiment. The Tivoli ones could end up sunny and tropical. *[laughs]* Does a painting often move from one studio to another?

MARDEN: Yes. This one came up from the city.

CONNORS: Do you ever get a real urge to work on a particular painting that's not close to you geographically?

MARDEN: I'm feeling that way about the Greek one. Sometimes if I know I'll be there for just ten days, I don't get all involved in it. But if I'll be there for a month, I go right into it really fast. So there are all these things under way.

CONNORS: Different arms of the —

MARDEN: Octopus. *[laughs]*

III. Monochrome

CONNORS: When did you re-enter the monochrome? Was it with *Ru Ware Project*?

MARDEN: I guess so.

CONNORS: What was that moment like?

MARDEN: We went to Taiwan when they reopened the Palace Museum with a big Song Dynasty show, which included the largest gathering of Ru ware. There aren't a lot of pieces of Ru ware in the world — I think seventy-something — and I had already seen a few in the Sir Percival David Collection in London. The stuff is really exquisite. So I saw it there in Taiwan, and later in the trip I thought, "I'll do a painting about the Ru ware, trying to remember the color."

CONNORS: Which relates back to earlier monochromes that had an origin in the world, like *Nebraska* (1966).

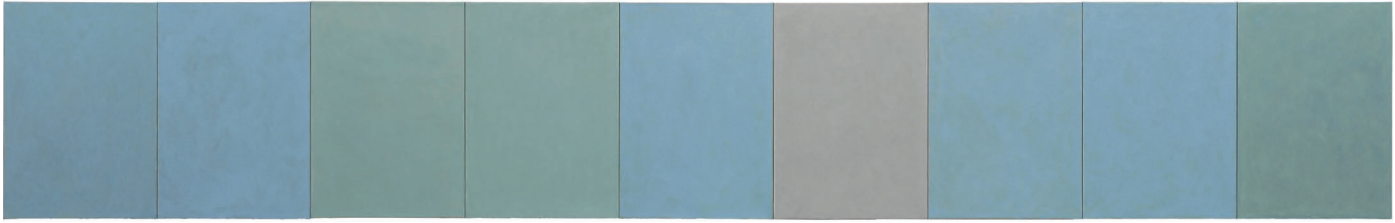
MARDEN: Yes, there is always a basis in — I keep wanting to say reality, but it isn't.

CONNORS: Memories or impressions.

MARDEN: Right. It's based on something. But that isn't what the painting is. That's why I did *Ru Ware Project*. You wake up in the middle of the night and you have this idea. You say, "Okay, I can do it."



Near Brice Marden's studio, Golden Rock, Nevis



Ru Ware Project, 2007–12, Oil on linen, nine joined panels. 24 x 162 inches; 61 x 411 cm

CONNORS: And did it feel exciting?

MARDEN: Oh yes, it was really fun. You know you can do it, but then there's something else. It's a whole different idea. And, extending that into the *terre verte*, it was like, how do you make a painting?

CONNORS: I wonder if your initial turn away from the monochrome was a way to break up the perception of the plane, or the reception of the color. To me the calligraphic paintings seem tougher, more difficult to see all at once and to assimilate. The viewer has to work more.

MARDEN: Yes.

CONNORS: And I was wondering, reading about your initial breakaway from the monochrome, if this was purposeful, like throwing a wrench into your own system — but also into the viewer's.

MARDEN: Yes, that's a bit of it. I don't want to stop doing the calligraphic paintings.

CONNORS: I guess that's what I'm getting at with this question.

MARDEN: What's happening with the monochromatic paintings is that I'm getting certain colors I never got. And now I can use those things in the calligraphic paintings. Say you have a line, and you have a color, and you keep reworking it and reworking it — something would start to happen, right? I like to see that happen with the whole painting. There's never a plan of what to do next. I mean, it's part of the painting — that what you do next gets worked out.

CONNORS: There's a funny quote where you said you couldn't see a big difference between the monochromes and the calligraphic paintings. Which is a ridiculous thing to say, of course, but at the end of the day it seems totally logical to me. Structurally they're strongly related. And, especially knowing how they were constructed, it makes sense that you return to them later with the muscle memory of the calligraphic work, bringing it back into the monochromes, like reverse engineering.

MARDEN: I'm painting the monochromes in a much different way than I used to. Now I just start slapping the paint on.

CONNORS: They're painted faster?

MARDEN: Much faster. Before, especially with the wax, you had to work. I mean, that was fast too, but you had to get it to a certain "right."

IV. Drawing

CONNORS: I was curious about the directness of drawing that you've been talking about, about there being very little interference between you and the thing. But then there were the long sticks and complicating devices.

MARDEN: What's been happening now, though, is that I'm down to using the stubs of sticks. I used to start off with these long things, and it would make for nice accidents where you'd lose control. But lately distance doesn't enter into it, because I haven't been doing any big drawings.

CONNORS: So there's a different tactic between the paintings and the drawings. Because with the paintings there are sometimes lots of rules and an incredible amount of layering and time. That the two so directly interweave is really interesting, because they involve such completely different states of mind.

MARDEN: Well, that's always been a thing. One of the reasons I started making the calligraphic paintings was to get the drawing into the painting. So they're always running parallel. But not always equal.

CONNORS: The early drawings, the graphite ones rubbed with wax, were almost paintings.

MARDEN: Yes. Now I look at them and I think they're paintings on paper. The wax becomes the binder.

CONNORS: From what I can tell, you don't want drawing to be seen as any less than painting.

MARDEN: Well, I'm a believer in the idea of the finished drawing. I remember very distinctly my color and design teacher at Boston University talking about the New York painters, saying, "These guys don't draw. For them, drawing is just preparation for the painting." But as time went by I started to see drawings by those artists, like de Kooning. And combined with Rauschenberg and Johns, who were showing drawings when I was a student, that made a big impact. Johns was making these really finished drawings.

CONNORS: I keep thinking of refinement as a running thread in your recent work, but every once in a while I feel you resisting the idea.

MARDEN: This is going to sound awful, but the more refined Minimalism got, the more minor it was. I think the really good artists were hitting it very early. They didn't have to refine it.

CONNORS: Yes, even the five *Nevis Stele* paintings are still pretty rough.

MARDEN: Yes.

CONNORS: So it feels wrong to use that word. But at the same time it feels like there's a sharpening of your ideas.

MARDEN: Sometimes you have to refine. It's the only way you can nail it. But it doesn't have to be done all the time.

CONNORS: The *African Drawings* also seem different to me, in a way. I saw a quote about your resistance to people reading the early calligraphic drawings as an attempt to invent a language. But in some of the *African Drawings* —

MARDEN: They're made to look like characters.

CONNORS: Yes. And they don't look Asian anymore. They look hieroglyphic. And it's more like accumulation rather than connection, like individual characters arranged left to right.

MARDEN: That's how they start, as a grid of fifteen by fifteen, and then I let an image come up from it. And I convinced myself that the monochrome was the image that wanted to come up.

CONNORS: I was just thinking the calligraphic drawings were always the skeleton or structure under the monochromes. Do the drawings lead the paintings?

MARDEN: It always seemed to me that the drawings were ahead of the paintings. [*points to a painting in progress*] I love this one. I've got to go and repaint it.

CONNORS: That's a dog hair.

MARDEN: [*laughs*]

CONNORS: All my paintings have dog hair in them. So where were you when you made the *African Drawings*?

MARDEN: I started them on an island off Tanzania. We were there for my wife's birthday. We stayed for about three days, and that's where I started a lot of these drawings.

CONNORS: Looking at the calligraphy in some of the *African Drawings*, it's almost like you're not joining the letters. You're maintaining the autonomy of each character.

MARDEN: Well, I build the fifteen-by-fifteen grid freehand. I'm not measuring it out. Then when I get it I just start joining it. There's usually something in the dot that goes this way or that way. But it's all just intuitive.

CONNORS: In other drawings there's a coagulation within the network. They look like a drift or a net. Instead of an even dispersion, there seems to be a place where you're getting lost in the drawing, and it's drifting.

MARDEN: The more you work it, the more that can happen. And some I leave because I just like the way they look.

CONNORS: It's interesting to have these greyed-out hieroglyphic drawings in the same context as the ones that have the organic drift.

MARDEN: You know, they go on and they get more complicated. I keep thinking I don't know what I'll do with these drawings, whether I'll start adding colors to them. I just assume they'll become my next paintings.

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